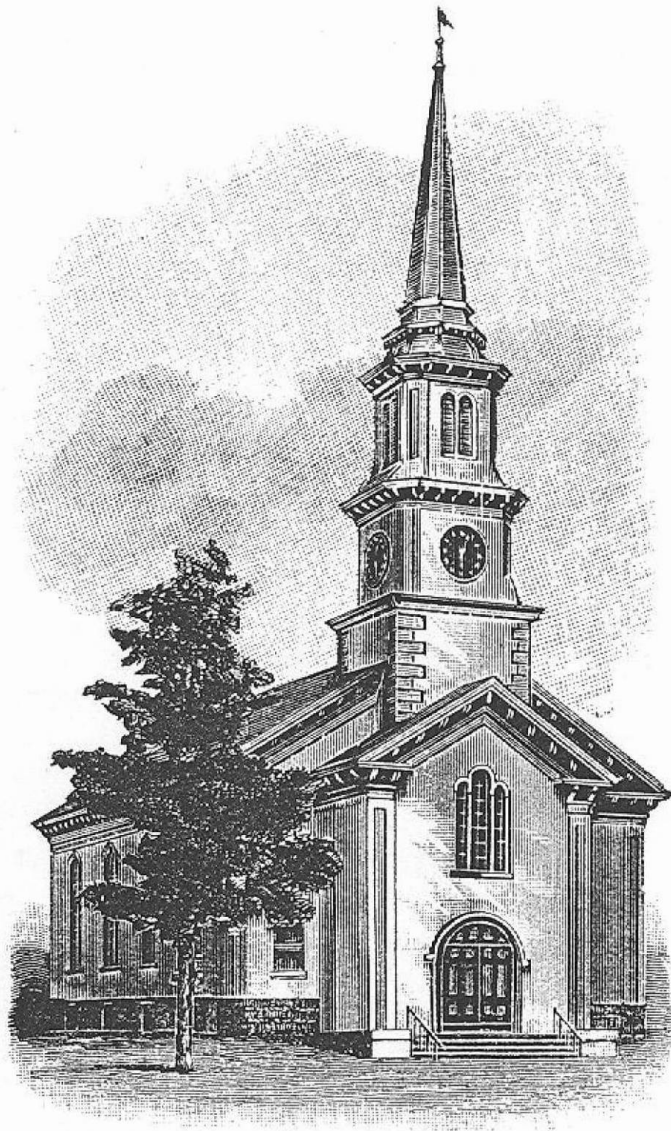
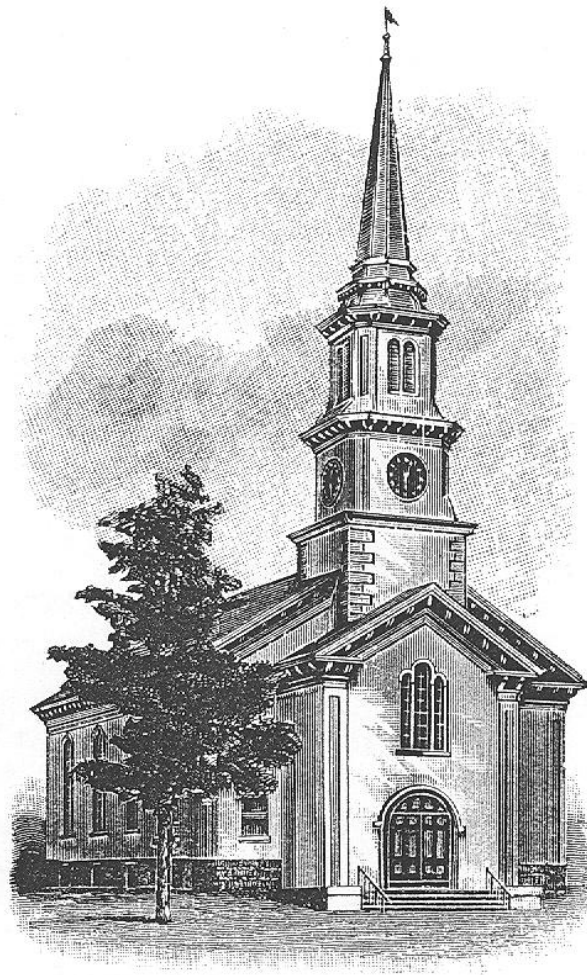


CHAPTERS ON THE HISTORY OF THE  
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF  
FALMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS,  
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



REV. DR. DOUGLAS K. SHOWALTER  
2010, Revised 2024

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**CHAPTERS ON THE HISTORY OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF FALMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS, OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST,**  
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*The picture of the First Congregational Church of Falmouth on the cover is from an 1892 worship bulletin of our church.*

*I dedicate this book to my beloved wife  
Chris, who has supported my ministry through the  
years and added to it through her own skills, also  
to our parishioners at the First Congregational  
Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts, of the UCC,  
who have shared their lives and faith with me.*

## Key to Records

### First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts, of the UCC

The earliest records of the church from the time it was gathered in 1708 to November 23, 1731 have been missing since at least the 19th century.

- FCC1* – (Vol. 1) *Falmouth Church Records Continued from November ye 24, 1731*  
[to February 3, 1790]
- FCC2* – (Vol. 2) *The Church Records of Falmouth from Feby 3<sup>d</sup> 1790*  
[to November 11, 1833]
- FCC3* – (Vol. 3) [12/24/1833–10/15/1890]
- FCC4* – (Vol. 4) *First Congl Church, Falmouth* [12/26/1890–12/12/1917]
- FCC5* – (Vol. 5) [1/2/1917–1/21/1948]
- FCC6* – (Vol. 6) [1948–1959]
- FCC7* – (Vol. 7) [1960–December 29, 1968]
- FCC8* – (Vol. 8) [12/29/1968–1/23/1983]
- FCC9* – (Vol. 9) [Church Meetings 10/5/1983–1988]
- FCC10* – (Vol. 10) [Church Meetings 1/89–10/92]
- FCC11* – [Church Meetings 1987–1993]
- FCC12* – [Church Meetings 1994–2000]
- FCC13* – [Church Meetings 2001–2006]
- FCC14* – [Church Meetings 2007–2010]

### First Congregational Society of Falmouth, Massachusetts

- FCS1* – The earliest records of the First Congregational Society of Falmouth appear mingled with Falmouth Town Records from about 1777 to 1803.
- FCS2* – *Society Records of Falmouth, 1804* [to 1851]
- FCS3* – [April 1852–March 1902]
- FCS4* – *Records of the First Congregational Church Society of Falmouth*  
*Beginning with the first day of January 1903, Ending with minutes of last*  
*meeting as the First Congregational Society, January 14, 1936, Merged*  
*and incorporated as The First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Mass.*  
*See separate record book, Vol. 5*
- FCS5* – *A Record of the Proceedings of the Committee of the First Congregational*  
*Society in Falmouth, Massachusetts chosen May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1824, agreeable to*  
*an Act passed the 7<sup>th</sup> of Feby preceeding entitled “An Act enabling the*  
*First Congregational Society in the Town of Falmouth to dispose of*  
*certain Real Estate”*
- FCS6* – *First Congregational Society, Treasurer records, April 14, 1834–1898*

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## Preface and Acknowledgments

Many church histories seem to focus on the church itself with little recognition of the religious and secular context in which the church has lived out its life. In these chapters, I have sought to present aspects of our First Congregational Church of Falmouth's history within the context of American Congregationalism and Massachusetts law, both of which have shaped our church's life at numerous points. Researching and compiling this book in the first decade of this 21st century and now revising it in 2024 has truly been a labor of love for me. I believe that knowing one's past is a great help in appreciating the significance of the present and moving wisely and effectively into the future. My knowledge of my Falmouth church's past and the context in which it has evolved has often, I believe, served my ministry well.

I wish to thank the following people who have helped me during the course of my years of research and writing: our church's Archivists, Lois Parker and Karen Allen; Mary Sicchio, Archivist, and other staff at the Falmouth Historical Society; Dr. Margaret Bendroth, Dr. Harold Worthley, Jessica Steytler, Claudette Newhall, and Robin Duckworth at the Congregational Library in Boston; Falmouth Town Clerk Michael Palmer and staff at the Falmouth Town Hall; Judy Stetson and other editors of the *Spritsail* journal of the Woods Hole Historical Collection; Joyce Pendery and Ralph Wadleigh of the Falmouth Genealogical Society; Diana Yount and staff at the Franklin Trask Library at Andover Newton Theological School; the late Rev. Nanette Geertz; Martha Evans, our church's Office Administrator; Marge Rugen; Jean and Phil Holmes; the late Mary Rogers; the late Dorothy Svenning; Tom Haynes; John Honey; Jan Hull; Jack Hathaway; Dick Meyer; John Caspole; Dick Harmon; Tom Ryan; Peter Partridge; Karen Deeds-Jarvie; and Roland M. Baumann, Archivist at Oberlin College.

I also wish to thank the following organizations and their staffs for their help: the Falmouth Public Library; *The Falmouth Enterprise*; the Sturgis Library in Barnstable; *The Boston Herald*; the Mayflower Society Library in Plymouth; the Library of Congress; the Plymouth Law Library; the William Brewster Nickerson Cape Cod History Archives at Cape Cod Community College; the New England Historical Genealogical Society in Boston; the Boston Public Library; the Chestnut Street Meeting House and Cemetery Association in Millville, Massachusetts; the Waterville Historical Society of Waterville, Ohio; the Yale University Library, Divinity Library Special Collection; and the University of Vermont Archives.

I thank them and all others who have helped me along the way. However, any errors of fact or interpretation in these chapters are my own.

Rev. Dr. Douglas K. Showalter  
September 2024

*For only Love can build the church, whose cornerstone is Christ.*  
Katharine Lee Bates, "Our Church," 1908

## Chapter 1 – Early Falmouth and the Gathering of Our Church

### Early Falmouth

Falmouth was the last area on Cape Cod to be opened to English settlers in the 1600s. At the time, the area was known as “Suckneset,”<sup>1</sup> an Indian name that meant “the place where black wampum is found.” That name referred to the black part of quahog shells Indians in the area used in bead form as currency.<sup>2</sup> In 1659, the General Court of Plymouth Colony authorized the purchase of land in Suckneset from the Indians who owned it.<sup>3</sup> By 1661, twelve colonists held parcels of that land, and two homes were built there. Many of those first landholders were from Barnstable.<sup>4</sup>

In 1663, the General Court put Suckneset under the jurisdiction of the town of Barnstable because the Court did not consider Suckneset strong enough to stand on its own.<sup>5</sup> The Court also encouraged the settlers in Suckneset to increase their numbers so they could better conduct their civil and religious affairs. Plymouth Colony law at that time forbade the creation of new towns if their populations were not large enough to support such needs.<sup>6</sup> The law also required all colonists to attend public worship on the Sabbath.<sup>7</sup> (<sup>8</sup>)



Plymouth Colony portion of “Map of the Seat of War in New England”

Carington Bowles, 1776

American Memory Project, Library of Congress

## Securing a Minister

A twenty-acre lot was left vacant by the earliest purchasers of Sucknesset land, known as the Proprietors. It was to be used in securing a minister for the community.<sup>9</sup> In 1673, the General Court also put a tax on horses and like animals using Sucknesset's common, with the proceeds to be used for that same purpose.<sup>10</sup>

On July 23, 1677, the year after King Philip's War ended, Sucknesset's Proprietors agreed to give ten acres of land and some marsh and meadow lands to Jonathan Dunham and his heirs forever.<sup>11</sup> Dunham was our community's first minister.<sup>12</sup> He was a layman and likely lacked a college education.<sup>13</sup> Presumably Dunham's ministry in Sucknesset began in 1677, at the time he received that land.<sup>14</sup> In this period, lay ministers like Dunham were helpful to small, remote Plymouth Colony communities like Sucknesset, which had no formally gathered church of its own and was likely unable to support an ordained, college-educated minister.<sup>15</sup>

Four years later, on July 7, 1681, the General Court of Plymouth,

*ordered and hereby granted, that the people and society of said Sakonesset [Sucknesset] doe sett apart about thirty acres of vpland and proportionable psell of meddow thervnto as may be suitable for the healp and incurragement of such fitt psons as doth or may be healpfull to them in teaching the word of God amongst them, and to ly ppetually for such an end successiuelly.*<sup>16</sup>

In passing that order, the General Court was likely trying to help Sucknesset prepare for the day when it finally would be able to settle an ordained minister whose ministry was enhanced by the study of logic, rhetoric, divinity, and ancient languages, such as Hebrew, at Harvard College.<sup>17</sup> The Puritan tradition strongly valued an educated ministry.

Jonathan Dunham remained in Sucknesset until about 1684, when he left to live on Martha's Vineyard. Sucknesset authorities took back, by purchase, all of Dunham's land and rights in Sucknesset, presumably at the time he left. Lacking ministerial education but experienced in ministerial work, Dunham was ordained in Edgartown in 1694. He served the Puritan church there until his death in 1717.

The aforementioned General Court order of 1681 was entered into Sucknesset's Proprietor records on May 20, 1686, perhaps to emphasize the community's attention to that order. Shortly thereafter, on June 4, 1686, Sucknesset was finally incorporated as a town in Plymouth Colony.<sup>18</sup> Reflecting on that event, historian Richard King said,

*Satisfied that Saconesett [Sucknesset] was serious about obtaining a minister, the General Court incorporated it as a town, the first one created directly out of the expansion of Cape Codders themselves.*<sup>19</sup>

On June 6, 1687, a year after the town's incorporation, the proprietors of Sucknesset voted that parcels of land amounting to forty-two acres plus marsh and meadow lands—including the land and dwelling house on it purchased from former minister Jonathan Dunham—were to,

*be and remain to be forever to be improved for ye help and incouragement of any fit person that doth or may be employed in teaching ye good word of God amongst us or our posterity after us, and to be perpetually to such an end successively without any alteration or changes forever.*<sup>20</sup>

Sucknesset became an incorporated town in a very stressful period. From 1686–1689, England sought to limit the freedom of New England's colonists by merging their colonies under the direct rule of a Royal Governor, Sir Edmund Andros. Andros was appointed by the English king. That effort failed, but in 1691, Plymouth Colony was annexed to its much stronger neighbor, the Massachusetts Bay Colony, to form the Province of Massachusetts Bay.<sup>21</sup> The following year, 1692, the infamous Salem Witchcraft trials took place. That unfortunate event was likely, at least in part, a reflection of the uncertainty and anxiety many colonists felt at that time.

By 1694, the General Court of the new Province of Massachusetts Bay had renamed our town “Falmouth,” after the English port city from which the Pilgrims had sailed in the “Mayflower” to the New World in 1620.<sup>22</sup>

If Falmouth's first meeting house was not already constructed by the time the town was incorporated in 1686, it was likely built soon afterwards in order to comply with Plymouth Colony law at that time. That law required that there be such a structure for the town's worship of God.<sup>23</sup> Although the exact location is not known today, that meeting house was built in the vicinity of the Old Burying Ground off today's Mill Road, which was then near the town's center.

Samuel Shiverick was Falmouth's second minister. Like Dunham, Shiverick was also a layman.<sup>24</sup> Said to be a Huguenot from France,<sup>25</sup> Shiverick had previously served the Puritan church in Sippican [now Marion] in the period before it was able to secure an ordained minister. Shiverick may have come to Falmouth as early as 1687, though it is known that he was in town by 1700. In 1703, the town dismissed Shiverick and, for a number of years thereafter, likely paid for the services of various supply preachers when they could be secured. Apparently, it was still the town's goal to settle an ordained, Harvard-educated minister.

### **A “Branch” Church of the Church of Christ in Barnstable**

In those early years, the worshipping congregation in Falmouth was not an independent entity. Rather, it was considered a “branch” church of the Puritan church in the town of Barnstable. Some worshipers in Falmouth were members of that Barnstable church. They likely made the long trip to the Barnstable church for baptisms and the Lord's Supper,<sup>26</sup> and at other times when a Sabbath service was not available in Falmouth.<sup>27</sup> Given Puritan sensitivities at the time, it is very likely that our community's first two ministers, Rev. Dunham and Rev. Shiverick,



were not allowed to conduct baptisms or offer the Lord's Supper because they were laymen. In 1692, Province law mandated attendance at public worship every Sabbath. It also restricted most travel and many activities on that day.<sup>28</sup>

It was common practice at that time for the Province's established Puritan churches to sponsor such "branch" churches in their vicinity, as part of their domestic mission work. Such sponsorship allowed new churches to be established gradually, so established churches were not quickly divided into two weak churches, which would be detrimental to both.<sup>29</sup>

As Falmouth grew, its worshiping congregation became increasingly able to stand on its own. However, there were some citizens in Falmouth, likely including many Quakers, who were opposed to settling a Puritan minister in town and paying for that minister with their taxes, as the law then required.<sup>30</sup>

In 1706, the town voted to secure Rev. John Gore as the town's new minister, but apparently he did not settle in the community.<sup>31</sup> In 1707, Joseph Metcalf, a recent Harvard College graduate, accepted Falmouth's call to be its settled minister.

### **The Gathering of Our Church**

On Sunday, October 10, 1708, the Barnstable Church released its members residing in Falmouth so they could "gather" their own autonomous church. As recorded that day in the records of the Church of Christ in Barnstable:<sup>32</sup>

*the following persons signified their desire to be dismissed to the work of gathering into a church estate in Falmouth; whereupon, voted, that according to our best observation the conversation of these persons has been agreeable to their profession; and we do, therefore, recommend them to the great and good work of forming and organizing a church, which they are upon, and therein into the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we commend them viz:*

*Samuel Shiverick Sr.  
John Robinson and Elisa. his wife  
John Davis and Hannah his wife  
Moses Hatch and Elisa. His wife  
Thomas Parker and Mary his wife  
Joseph Parker and Mercy his wife  
Aaron Rawley and Mary his wife  
Anna, wife of Joseph Hatch  
Alice, wife of Benjamin Hatch  
Mary, wife of William Johnson  
Hannah, wife of Benjamin Lewis  
Lydia, wife of Samuel Hatch  
Bethia, wife of Joseph Robinson*

*Amen*

*The above persons were living in Falmouth*

*Signed Jonathan Russell*

*Pastor with the Consent of the brethren*

Shortly thereafter, on Thursday, October 28, 1708, our Falmouth congregation was officially “gathered” as an independent ecclesiastical body, which would also be in fellowship with its sister Puritan churches on the Cape and throughout New England. On that same day, Joseph Metcalf was ordained to serve our newly formed church.<sup>33</sup>

### **Owning the Covenant**

According to Puritan custom, churches were gathered when individuals freely owned a covenant together. In those covenants, people essentially agreed to walk together in the Christian faith to be a church of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, no copy of the original covenant agreed to at the gathering of our church in 1708 seems to have survived.

Reflecting our Puritan heritage, our Falmouth church today continues to be a gathered church. A covenant appears in our modern church’s by-Laws, along with the statement that our church exists by virtue of that covenant. Everyone who becomes a member of our church today essentially agrees to this covenant. When people join our church and sign our membership book, they are, in effect, adding their names to and “owning” that covenant for themselves. Our church’s modern covenant begins with this affirmation:

*Acknowledging Jesus Christ to be our Savior and Lord, and accepting the Holy Scriptures as our rule of faith and practice and recognizing the privilege and duty of uniting ourselves for Christian fellowship . . . we do now, in the sight of God, and invoking his blessing, solemnly covenant and agree with each other to associate ourselves to be a Church of the Lord Jesus Christ . . .*<sup>34</sup>

From time to time, churches of Congregational heritage like ours may revise their covenant to re-express their faith and mutual commitment to one another in words suited to their own generation. Nevertheless, the basic purpose of these church covenants always remains the same.

The seven men dismissed from the Barnstable church on October 10, 1708, may have been considered the seven “pillars” around which our Falmouth church was gathered. The custom of forming Puritan churches around seven men, esteemed in the community for their Christian faith and character, was based on Proverbs 9:1: “Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.”<sup>35</sup> After those seven men first owned the covenant establishing our church, they likely voted to invite others to join them in owning it.<sup>36</sup>

In those early years, before the appearance of other religious denominations in the community—apart from the Quakers—our church was likely known as the “Church of Christ in

Falmouth.”

Between 1700 and 1710, only eight Puritan churches were gathered in Massachusetts. At least in part, the gathering of so few new churches in that period was attributed to the French and Indian War, which ravaged numerous settlements on the frontier of Massachusetts.<sup>37</sup>

It appears that our church was the tenth Puritan church to be gathered on Cape Cod.<sup>(38)</sup> Its presence on the Cape was preceded by the following churches, shown here with their gathering dates:

Barnstable [1616/1634(5)/1639]  
 Sandwich [1638]  
 Yarmouth [1639]  
 Yarmouth, Second [1640]  
 Eastham [1646]  
 Barnstable, Separatist [1661]  
 Marshpee, Indian Church [1670]  
 Bourne, Herring Pond Indian Church [1670 or later]  
 Brewster [1700]



“Pilgrims Going To Church”  
 Artist: George Henry Boughton, 1867

## ENDNOTES

1. I have chosen to use the name “Sucknesset” in this account because it is the name, though sometimes spelled with two “t’s,” that I repeatedly found for this settlement in its early Proprietor records in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Otherwise, I could have referred to the community as “Saconessett” with any of various spellings, as it appears in early Plymouth Colony records. The original

Proprietor and Town records of Sucknesset and Falmouth are on individual sheets preserved in binders at the Falmouth Town Clerk's office. The pagination of those sheets is not always clear; therefore, in referencing those early records, I have chosen, in many instances, not to try to assign a page number to them.

2. Theodate Geoffrey, *Suckanesset Wherein May Be Read A History of Falmouth, Massachusetts* (Falmouth: The Falmouth Publishing Co., 1930), 14.

3. Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England: Court Orders, Vol. III, 1651–1661*, June 7, 1659, 164.

4. H. Roger King, *Cape Cod and Plymouth Colony in the Seventeenth Century* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994), 184–185.

5. Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England: Court Orders, Vol. IV, 1662–1668*. June 1, 1663, 41; King, 185.

6. David Pulsifer, ed., *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England: Laws*, Vol. 11, 1623–1682. 1663, 210; Frederick Freeman, *The History of Cape Cod: The Annals of The Thirteen Towns of Barnstable County* (Boston: Geo. C. Rand & Avery, 1862), Vol. II, 425. In Plymouth Colony, it originally was assumed that inhabitants would voluntarily support the cost of ministry in their own town, as the Pilgrims had voluntarily supported their religious needs during their years of exile in Holland. However, it eventually became clear that such voluntary support was not adequate in some of the colony's communities. Thus, in 1657, the colony's General Court began to create laws designed to secure that support. To improve the situation, the court in 1662 even went so far as to suggest that when whales were providentially washed up on the shores of colony towns, those towns should use a portion of those whales or their oil "for the Incurragement of an able Godly minnester amongst them." David Pulsifer, ed., 67, 207–208. For a discussion of the evolution of taxation to support the ministers in Plymouth Colony towns, see King, 115–121.

7. George D. Langdon, Jr., *Pilgrim Colony: A History of New Plymouth, 1620–1691* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 67. This law was passed in 1651 and appears in David Pulsifer, ed., 57–58.

8. This image is of the Carington Bowles *Map of the Seat of War in New England* (London, 1776), American Memory Project, Library of Congress. This image is in the public domain. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html> (August 10, 2010); also The Plymouth Colony Archive Project. <http://www.histarch.uiuc.edu/plymouth/1776map1.html>

9. *Proprietor Record, 1661–1805, Town of Falmouth*, June 6, 1687, 25. I thank our church's Archivist, Lois Parker, for calling my attention to this record. See also the section "The Parsonage Lands" in Chapter 15 – "The Meeting House Lot, Village Green, and Parsonage Lands" in this book.



10. Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England: Court Orders, Vol. V, 1668–1678*. July 4, 1673, 125.

11. *Proprietor Record, 1661–1805, Town of Falmouth*, 24:

*The 23<sup>rd</sup> of July 1677, at a meeting of ye Proprietors of Lands of Sucknesset it was joyntly agreed that Jonathan Dunham should have ten acres of upland all ye Skirts of marsh and meadow about ye Bass pond and ye norwest side of Quanamut neck that is not laid out in lots, to him and his and his heirs forever.*

12. Franklin Bowditch Dexter, ed., *Extracts from the Itineraries and Other Miscellanies of Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D., 1755–1794 With a Selection From His Correspondence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916), 262. Dr. Stiles, an 18th-century Puritan minister and President of Yale College, recorded many details about early New England churches and communities. He noted that Jonathan Dunham, a layperson, was our community's first minister. Dunham's ministry in Falmouth was long unrecognized in Falmouth—at least as far back as 1851, when the Falmouth church mentioned all its clergy, but not Dunham, in its *Articles of Faith and the Covenant of the First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Mass. With a List of the Members*. In recent years, I discovered the above statement from Dr. Stiles, which is, I believe, corroborated by the *Proprietor Record* of Falmouth and historical information about Martha's Vineyard cited in these endnotes.

13. Jonathan Dunham's entrance into the work of ministry without the formal education offered by Harvard College for that profession may be referred to in the following comment, which appears on his gravestone in the Tower Hill Cemetery in Edgartown, Massachusetts: "With Toil & Pains at first He Tell'd ye Ground, Call'd to Dress GOD's Vine Yard & ws faithful Found."

14. Charles Edward Banks, *The History of Martha's Vineyard, Duke's County, Massachusetts*. (Edgartown: Duke's County Historical Society, 1966), 151. Banks said in his book that he was quoting Sup. Judicial Court File No. 2110 in making the following statement regarding Jonathan Dunham:

*He had been for some time 'employed in Preaching the Good word of God amongst us for our Edification,' according to the statement of a committee representing the settlement at Succonnessit [Falmouth] in 1679 . . .*

The meaning of the above quote is not entirely clear to me. I think it likely means that the statement of the committee representing the settlement of Dunham at "Succonnessit" was made in 1679, not that Dunham's settlement itself took place in 1679. I assume that meaning is likely because the *Proprietor Record* of Sucknesset states very clearly in two different places that Dunham was given his land in Sucknesset in 1677, not in 1679. It seems unlikely that a community in that period would give land to a lay minister virtually two years before that individual began serving the community.

15. Noting that the Puritan church in Plymouth had been without an ordained minister since 1654, George D. Langdon, Jr. wrote that,

*By 1665 the failure of the Plymouth Church to secure a clergyman was a matter of grave*

*concern. The vacancy, of course, was not unique: other New England towns had, and continued to have, similar troubles . . . Sandwich had no minister from 1653 . . . until 1675 . . . Barnstable spent five years finding a replacement for Thomas Walley, who died in 1678. Because Puritan theology required a learned ministry and because after 1640 the arrival of Puritan ministers from England had dropped off sharply, trouble and delay in finding a minister sometimes occurred in the other New England colonies. Harvard was the only local source of trained men, and there were not enough graduates to fill all positions.*

Langdon, Jr., 118–119. See also David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1974) 194. Plymouth Colony was more open to lay preachers than was the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In fact, in 1653, the General Court of the Bay Colony “enacted the first in a series of laws designed to curb lay preaching.” See Hall, 184.

16. Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, *Vol. V*, July 7, 1681, 72. This court order was entered in the original *Proprietor Record, 1661–1805, Town of Falmouth*, 24, with the statements that it was made on July 13, 1681, and recorded in the *Book of Records* of Sucknesset on May 20, 1686.

17. Hall, 178. Also, as Hall said about lay preachers in this general period, on page 183:  
*Another challenge to the regular ministry came from the members of a counter ministry that began to form in the 1650's. The number of men in this category can only be estimated, since many were transients or held office briefly. But perhaps as many as twenty-five colonists performed outside (or marginally within) the Harvard establishment. Most of these preachers served in Maine, New Hampshire, and more remote Plymouth towns.*

18. Freeman, 428.

19. King, 185.

20. *Proprietor Record, 1661–1805, Town of Falmouth*, 25.

21. Cornelius Dalton, ed., *Leading the Way: A History of the Massachusetts General Court, 1629–1980* (Boston: Office of the Massachusetts Secretary of State), 1984, 37.

22. Many who have written on the history of Falmouth, including Frederick Freeman, have said that the town officially received that new name at the time it was incorporated in 1686. However, I have found no evidence for that assertion. Rather, my research suggests that Simeon Deyo, in his 1890 account of the town's history, gave an accurate account of this matter when he wrote the following:

*On the fourth of June, 1686, (O.S.), the population received full incorporation as a township; but it was called Succonesset in the town records still later . . . The entry in Volume IV, Colony Records of Plymouth says: 'Upon the request of the inhabitants of Seipican, alias Rochester, to become a township and have the priviledges of a town, the*

*Court granted their desire in yet respect, & the like granted to Suckannesset inhabitants,' and Charles F. Swift, in an examination of the provincial statutes, says he found the name Falmouth first used September 14, 1694. Arnold Gifford, of West Falmouth, has a deed dated March 16, 1693–4, in which Robert Harper, deeding to John Gifford, locates the land as 'in Suckannesset, alias Falmouth,' and we find no earlier use of the word.*

Simeon Deyo, ed., *History of Barnstable County, Massachusetts* (New York: H. W. Blake & Co., 1890), 634. See also King, endnote No. 31, 195, which says, "By 1694, the Massachusetts General Court had assigned the name Falmouth to Saconesett." *Mass. Prov. Recs.*, 1:178.

23. *The Laws of the Pilgrims: A Fascimile Edition of The Book of the General Laws of the Inhabitants of the Jurisdiction of New-Plimouth, 1672 & 1685.* (London: George Prior Publishers, 1977), [1685, Chapter XII, Meeting-Houses], 50. The law stated:

*It is Enacted by the Court, That there be a publick House Erected in every Town of this Government, for the Town comfortably to meet in, to Worship God . . .*

24. Dexter, ed., 262.

25. A letter of Amos Otis, Esq. said that Rev. Samuel Shiverick was a Huguenot and the first settled minister in Falmouth. See "Judge Sewall's Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard Memoranda, 1702," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, January 1860, Vol. 14, 15, footnote. It has been estimated that from 1666 to 1716, four thousand people from France immigrated to New England, particularly eastern Massachusetts. Many of those people were Calvinist Protestants who left France because of religious persecution. France was essentially a Roman Catholic country at that time. However, after almost a century of granting some rights to Protestants, the King of France, in 1685, issued the "Edict of Fountainbleau" (sometimes referred to as the "revocation of the Edict of Nantes"), which made Protestantism illegal in France. Allan and Paul F. Cadman Forbes, *Boston and Some Noted Emigrés* (Boston: State Street Trust Co.), 1938, 5.

26. Horton Davies, *The Worship of the American Puritans, 1629–1730.* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1999), 302–303. The Lord's Supper might have been offered on a monthly basis or less frequently, and probably more often at the discretion of a congregation's ordained minister than on a regular calendar. Our Falmouth church celebrated the Lord's Supper six times in 1732.

27. Plymouth Colony law restricted travel on the Sabbath, even to a worship service in a nearby town if a service was available in one's own town. *The Laws of the Pilgrims*, [1685, Chapter XV, Sabbath], 57–58. In modern times, it has sometimes been said that early Sucknesset and Falmouth settlers made the long trip to the Barnstable church every Sabbath. I suspect that was likely not the case once the community secured its own preacher to conduct Sabbath services locally.

28. Winton U. Solberg, *Redeem The Time: The Puritan Sabbath in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 281. In 1716, the General Court of the Province of

Massachusetts relaxed the requirement for weekly public worship. The law now required that one not neglect a full month of worship. [294] In 1792, that requirement was relaxed further. Massachusetts law now required attendance at Sabbath worship at least once every three months. [295].

29. Joseph S. Clark, *A Historical Sketch of the Congregational Churches in Massachusetts, from 1620 to 1858 With an Appendix* (Boston: Congregational Board of Publication, 1858), 95–96.

30. Quakers were not legally exempted from paying taxes to support Puritan clergy in the Province of Massachusetts Bay until 1728. Susan Reed Stifler, *Church and State in Massachusetts, 1691–1740* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1914), 132.

31. Freeman, 436.

32. Freeman, 437–438. In 1924, the early records of the Puritan church in Barnstable were reproduced in pictures and bound in a large volume, copies of which were distributed to numerous American archives. Unfortunately, in examining a copy of that volume held by the West Parish Church of Barnstable itself, I did not find a record of this October 10, 1708 action by the Barnstable church. Apparently, some of the early Barnstable records shown in that volume were originally recorded on loose sheets. It seems possible that this particular 1708 action was recorded on such a loose sheet, and that sheet, while known to 19<sup>th</sup>-century historians such as Frederick Freeman, was lost or misplaced before 1924. *Records of the West Parish of Barnstable, Massachusetts, 1668–1807* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1924). That record was also quoted by Rev. Enoch Pratt in 1842. Pratt was then the minister of that Barnstable church. Rev. Enoch Pratt, “Complete List of the Congregational Ministers in the County of Barnstable, Ms., from the Settlement of the County to 1843 and Notes on the Preceding Tables,” *American Quarterly Register*, August 1842, 67.

33. *Sibley’s Harvard Graduates*, Volume V, 1701–1712, (Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA, 1937), 221; Dexter, ed., 262.

34. *Constitution and By Laws, First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts of the United Church of Christ*, Revised February 7, 1999.

35. Ola Elizabeth Winslow, *Meetinghouse Hill: 1630–1783* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1952), 30–35.

36. Some writers have assumed that the only people who joined our Falmouth church the day it was gathered in 1708 were those individuals who had previously been dismissed from the Barnstable church congregation on October 10<sup>th</sup> to gather our church. However, it is not actually known how many people joined that day. Other individuals who were then living in Falmouth but who had not been members of the Barnstable church might have joined too. Also, Joseph Metcalf, who was ordained that day to serve our Falmouth church, would have been considered a member too.



37. Clark, 113.

38. The image is of George Henry Boughton's picture "Pilgrims Going to Church," from 1867. It is in the public domain.

<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:George-Henry-Boughton-Pilgrims-Going-To-Church.jpg>

## Chapter 2 – Tracing Our Spiritual Roots

Our church's history as an independent religious organization begins with its 1708 gathering. However, our church's distinctive spiritual heritage can be traced back much further than that, to Barnstable, to England and Holland, and to the Protestant Reformation in 16th-century Switzerland.

### Reformed Protestantism

Our church and all churches of Congregational heritage are deeply indebted to the Swiss



Zurich and Ulrich Zwingli's Grossmünster Church  
(double towers) in 1834  
*Artist: William Henry Bartlett*

Protestant Reformers Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin. Those Reformers championed numerous key Protestant beliefs that are still very important in our church, such as the beliefs that:

- ~ Every Christian can have a direct relationship with God.
- ~ The Holy Bible is our primary rule of faith.
- ~ Hearing the preached Word of God is important to Christian life and worship.

Through the centuries, our congregation's worship has also reflected Zwinglian innovations. For example, following Zwingli's

lead, we have worshiped in relatively simple settings to avoid spiritual distractions. Also, our parishioners have often received the elements of the Lord's Supper while seated together in the pews, as a symbol of being one body in Christ.<sup>(1)</sup>

### English Puritanism

Deeply influenced by the Reformation's Reformed wing, Puritanism emerged in England in the 1500s as a challenge to England's state-supported Anglican Church. Using the Bible as their guide, the Puritans criticized many aspects of the Anglican Church, such as set prayers and scripture readings, certain sacramental rituals, and the office of bishop, which they felt were unscriptural.

The Puritans also wanted, as much as humanly possible, to have "pure" churches that contained only genuine believers and not nominal Christians or unrepentant wrongdoers. The

Puritans hoped that all such genuine believers—often referred to as “visible saints”—whom they permitted to join their churches were among the elect, namely, chosen by God for salvation. However, the Puritans also realized that some individuals they assumed were such “saints” might not be. The purity of church membership that the Puritans sought was particularly difficult to attain in the Church of England at that time, for their congregations included virtually all English citizens. Their bishops rarely suspended anyone from church rolls.<sup>2</sup>

### **Separatist and Non-Separatist Puritans<sup>3</sup>**

In the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, there were two basic forms of English Puritanism. There were Separatist Puritans, like the Mayflower Pilgrims, who wanted nothing to do with the Church of England because they believed it had become too corrupt to be reformed. There were also non-Separatist Puritans, like the Massachusetts Bay Colony settlers, who believed that the Anglican Church could be reformed, as there was still a remnant of genuine believers within that church.<sup>(4)</sup>



U. S. Postage - 1920

Separatist and non-Separatist Puritans in that period often worshiped in secret to avoid persecution by the English authorities. In 1593, the English government went so far as to hang three Separatist Puritans for their religious writings. Facing increased persecution in their homeland, about 20,000 English Puritans immigrated to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the 1630s, in what has been called the “Great Migration.”

### **Rev. Henry Jacob**

Our Falmouth church grew out of the early Puritan church in Barnstable. And that church, in turn, owed its origin to Rev. Henry Jacob, an Oxford-educated Anglican priest in England who came to hold strong non-Separatist Puritan views.

In 1604, Jacob published a treatise<sup>5</sup> in England that maintained that only the congregational form of church government was authorized by the Holy Bible. This challenge to the Anglican Church and its episcopal form of church government led to Jacob’s imprisonment. Upon Jacob’s release, he fled to Holland, where he eventually joined Rev. John Robinson and his Separatist Puritan congregation in Leyden. Robinson’s strong Separatist views were moderated some while he was in Holland. Scholars have wondered if that was due to this contact with Rev. Jacob, who could still see some value in the Anglican Church.

### **The Gathered Church at Southwark**

In 1616, Rev. Henry Jacob returned to England and formed the first non-Separatist Puritan congregation on English soil.<sup>6</sup> That small church was located south of London, in

Southwark, near the famous London Bridge. Jacob's congregation is said to be the first church which ever referred to itself as "Congregational."<sup>7</sup> It was reported that after spending a day together in prayer and fasting, Jacob and a group of laymen "gathered" their Southwark church in this way:

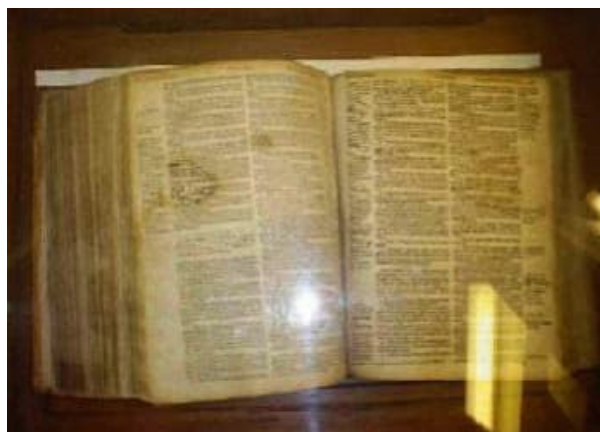
*Joyning togeather they joyned both hands each with other Brother and stood in a Ringwise: their intent being declared, Henry Jacob and each of the Rest made some confession or profession of their Faith & Repentance, some were longer some were briefer, Then they Covenanted togeather to walk in all God's Ways as he had revealed or should make known to them.*<sup>8</sup>

Jacob and other Puritans felt that gathering a church around a covenant that members freely "owned" was both biblically authorized and the best way to secure that purity of membership, which they felt was so important. Once the Southwark church was gathered, its members elected Rev. Jacob as their minister.

In 1620, some members of Rev. John Robinson's Leyden congregation sailed to the New World on the Mayflower, then established Plymouth Colony. In 1622, Henry Jacob resigned from the Southwark church. He later died in Jamestown, Virginia.

### **Rev. John Lothrop**

Rev. John Lothrop succeeded Rev. Jacob as minister of the Southwark church. Educated at Cambridge, Lothrop was a former Anglican priest. In 1632, as religious persecution increased in England, Rev. Lothrop and over forty of his Southwark parishioners were arrested as they worshiped in a private home. The authorities imprisoned Lothrop for two years. During that time, Lothrop's wife died, and his children were left without parental help. Lothrop was finally released from jail on the condition that he would go into foreign exile.<sup>9</sup> Thus, he, most of his children, and thirty-two of his parishioners sailed across the Atlantic on the ship Griffen.



Rev. John Lothrop's Bible showing page  
on the left he repaired  
*Sturgis Library, Barnstable*

The 1606 Bishop's Bible which Rev. Lothrop carried with him during that voyage, has long been on display at the Sturgis Library in Barnstable.<sup>(10)</sup> During that passage, Lothrop fell asleep while reading that Bible, with the result that dripping hot candle wax burned a hole through some of its pages. It is said that Lothrop subsequently repaired those holes and carefully wrote in the passages that were missing, from his memory alone. His knowledge of the biblical text was that extensive, and no other Bible was on their ship.<sup>11</sup>

## Scituate and Barnstable

Rev. Lothrop and company arrived in Boston on September 18, 1634. After arriving, Lothrop and his followers quickly made their way to Plymouth Colony. There they settled in Situate and eventually built a meeting house for their worship services. As the years passed, controversies over the nature of Christian baptism<sup>12</sup> and the desire for more arable land led Rev. Lothrop and many of his parishioners to ask the General Court of Plymouth Colony for a new place in which to settle.

The result was that they moved to the part of Cape Cod known as Barnstable in October 1639. According to tradition, shortly after Rev. Lothrop and his company arrived in Barnstable, they celebrated the Lord's Supper at Sacrament Rock, fragments of which can still be seen today beside Route 6A in West Barnstable.<sup>13</sup>

Rev. Lothrop died in 1653. His successor, Rev. Thomas Walley, died in 1677. After that, the Barnstable church went without a minister until Rev. Jonathan Russell served the congregation from 1683 until his death in 1711. It was during Rev. Russell's ministry that Falmouth members of the Barnstable church were released from their membership in that church to gather their own Puritan church in Falmouth in 1708.



Sacrament Rock, West Barnstable

## ENDNOTES

1. This picture of Zurich in 1834 by William Henry Bartlett (1828–1854) is in the public domain. [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Zurich\\_Bartlett.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Zurich_Bartlett.jpg)  
In the time of Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531) Grossmünster had two spires. But after a fire in 1763 those spires were replaced by the two tower tops seen in Bartlett's work. Those towers still exist today.
2. A very informative book to read on the Puritans' desire for "pure" churches is Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1965).
3. In New England, and particularly in Southeastern New England, one often hears people speak of the Pilgrims and the Puritans, as though those terms describe two completely different groups of people. However, from the viewpoint of modern scholars, the early settlers of Plymouth Colony and the early settlers of Massachusetts Bay Colony were all essentially Puritans, though they were different kinds of Puritans, as described in this chapter.



4. This Pilgrim Tercentenary stamp issued by the United States Post Office in 1920 is in the public domain. [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mayflower\\_1920\\_Issue-1c.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mayflower_1920_Issue-1c.jpg)

5. Henry Jacob, *Reasons Taken Out of God's Word and the Best Human Testimony Providing a Necessity of Reforming Our Churches in England* (July 1604).

6. Jon Von Rohr, *The Shaping of American Congregationalism: 1620–1957* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1992), 20.

7. Walter R. Goehring, *Being an Account of the Gathering of the Church Body in London in 1616 with Henry Jacob and its Early History in the New World And particularly of the West Parish Meetinghouse built in 1717 in West Barnstable, Massachusetts* (West Barnstable, MA: The West Parish Memorial Foundation, 1959), 3.

8. Champlin Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters In the Light of Recent Research (1550–1641)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), Vol. 1, 314.

9. Richard Woodruff Price, *John Lothrop (1584–1653): A Puritan Biography & Genealogy* (Salt Lake City: Richard W. Price and Associates, 1989), 11.

10. Rev. Lothrop's Bible is displayed at the Sturgis Library in the village of Barnstable in Barnstable, Massachusetts. His house, built in 1644, "forms the original part of the Library" and is said to be the oldest library building in the United States. It is also one of the oldest houses still remaining on Cape Cod. <http://www.sturgislibrary.org/general/history>

It has interested me that Rev. Lothrop's Bible was the translation known as the Bishop's Bible. Instead, I would have expected him to have the Geneva Bible translation, which was brought over with the Pilgrims on the Mayflower and generally preferred by the Puritans, in part because of its marginal notes with strongly Calvinistic theology. The Bishop's Bible was the translation authorized for use in Church of England worship services until it was replaced by the 1611 King James Version Bible. As David Ewert wrote,

*The Geneva Bible . . . was for years the household Bible of English Protestants. While it was not appointed to be read in the churches of England, it was the Bible of Scotland . . . it was the Bible of Shakespeare, the Bible of the Puritans, and the Bible of the Pilgrim Fathers.*

David Ewert, *A General Introduction to the Bible: From Ancient Tablets to Modern Translations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 195.

11. Price, 12.

12. H. Roger King, *Cape Cod and Plymouth Colony in the Seventeenth Century* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994), 47.

13. Goehring, 7. I thank Marge Rugen for locating and Joyce Pendery for securing for me the article "Sacrament Rock in Barnstable (Rte. 6A)" from the *Falmouth Genealogical Society Newsletter*, May–June 1995. The author of that article was likely the late Marge Gibson, then

editor of the society's newsletter. She was also involved with the archives in Sandwich, Massachusetts. Speaking of Sacrament Rock, the author wrote:

*Soon they made a trail [beside the rock] which developed into what is now Rt6A. In 1820, to accommodate more traffic, a piece of the rock was split off. In 1870 in order for the road to be widened again, they blasted the rock into fragments, and the pieces were used for foundations for homes, barns and rock walls around gardens. They did leave a marker stone as well as some fragments which they buried. In 1916 the town decided to erect a memorial and the buried fragments were unearthed for use in making a stone monument. On it is a bronze marker giving the significance of the monument. The marker rock is preserved now as one of the foundation stones at the righthand front corner of the tower of the 'East Parish' (Unitarian) Church. A tablet there says, 'A fragment of the rock which served the founders of the Church and town as a pulpit before the first meeting house was built.'*

## Chapter 3 – Our Church’s Clergy: 1600s–1789

### Jonathan Dunham, about 1677 or 1679 to 1684

Even before Falmouth became an incorporated town in 1686, the community was served by Jonathan Dunham, a lay preacher.<sup>1</sup> As a child, Jonathan emigrated with his family from Leyden, Holland, to Plymouth in Plymouth Colony. They came to Plymouth some years after the Mayflower made its historic voyage.<sup>2</sup> Jonathan’s father, John Dunham Sr., was a weaver and eventually became a deacon of the Church of Christ in Plymouth.<sup>3</sup>

In 1684, or soon after, Jonathan left Falmouth to serve as a minister in Edgartown for the rest of his life. He was ordained there in 1694 and died there in 1717. In 1714, Samuel Sewall attended a worship service in Edgartown, which Jonathan led. Reflecting on that experience, Sewall wrote in his diary that Dunham “made a short pithy prayer and then pronounced the Blessing . . . He seems to breathe a Spirit of Holiness.”<sup>4</sup>



Rev. Jonathan Dunham’s gravestone  
Courtesy of Chris Baer

Jonathan’s body was buried in Edgartown’s Tower Hill Cemetery. His gravestone bears this epitaph:

*Here lyes ye Body of ye Rev. Mr. Jonathan  
Dunham who Died December 18 Anno Domi  
1717 Aged about 85 Years  
Pastor of Church of CHRIST at Edgartown*

*With Toil & Pains at first He Tell’d ye Ground  
Call’d to Dress GOD’s Vine Yard & ws faithful  
Found Full Thirty Years ye Gospel He Did  
Despen His Work Being Done CHRIST JESUS  
Cal’d Him Hence. 1717.<sup>5</sup> (6)*

### Samuel Shiverick, before or by 1700–1703

Samuel Shiverick, another lay preacher, began his ministry in Falmouth before or by 1700<sup>7</sup>, and possibly as early as 1687.<sup>8</sup> Shiverick is said to have been a Huguenot who immigrated to New England from France. He may have fled from religious persecution in his native land.<sup>9</sup>

From 1683 to 1687, Samuel served as the minister of Sippican [in today’s Marion] on Buzzard’s Bay.<sup>10</sup> His meeting house there was built beside the ancient landmark still known as “Minister’s Rock.”<sup>11 12</sup> In both Sippican and Falmouth, Shiverick served the religious needs of the townspeople before an ordained minister was settled in the community and an autonomous church was actually gathered there.



Samuel likely played a significant role in the gathering of our Falmouth church. He was the first person and only minister to be on the list of those dismissed from the Barnstable church in 1708 to form our church.<sup>13</sup>

Unfortunately, Samuel's ministry in Falmouth encountered difficulties. In 1703, and possibly also in 1701, the town voted not to employ him for preaching any more.<sup>14</sup> In 1706, that message was reiterated, perhaps to keep him from doing some supply preaching at town expense. It's not known why Shiverick's preaching was not better received.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, during this period, the town also showed regard for "our ancient minister"<sup>16</sup> and for his "poverty"<sup>17</sup> by seeking to help Rev. Shiverick and his family financially. In 1712, Shiverick was reported as being blind.<sup>18</sup> Whatever the difficulties, Shiverick was remembered as "a devoted, gifted, pious man."<sup>19</sup> The site of his grave is not known.

### **Rev. Joseph Metcalf, 1707–1723**

Joseph Metcalf<sup>20</sup> was born in Dedham, Massachusetts, in 1682. He graduated from Harvard College in 1703 and earned a Master's degree there. Joseph was well liked in Malden, Massachusetts, where he was considered a possible successor to the town's noted minister, Rev. Michael Wigglesworth, who died in 1705. But Malden proved unwilling to fund Joseph's settlement. Already familiar with Falmouth from occasional preaching there, Joseph accepted the call to become Falmouth's minister in 1707. In addition to a cash salary, he was offered "firewood, two good cows, a well to be dug where he chose, and, to cover the cost of establishing his home, 160£ in money . . ."<sup>21</sup> Joseph Metcalf was ordained to serve our church at the time our church was gathered on October 28, 1708.<sup>22</sup>



Rev. Joseph Metcalf's gravestone  
Falmouth's Old Burying Ground

During Joseph's service in Falmouth, there were financial stresses brought on in part by the community's lack of wealth and Quakers who resisted the idea of paying taxes to the town to support a Puritan minister. By 1711, the town was a year behind in paying Joseph's salary, but he forgave the debt. In some other years, he turned to the province's General Court for help in securing adequate support from the town.<sup>23</sup>

The story is told that Joseph once replaced his wig with a more modern, larger one from Boston. To satisfy some women in the church who were critical of this new wig, Joseph freely gave it to them to cut off the locks that disturbed them. After that had been done, one woman claimed that the new wig still violated the Second Commandment against idolatry. Joseph's humorous response was that this commandment couldn't possibly apply because once the wig was clipped, it was unlike anything else in heaven

above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth.<sup>24</sup>

Another story is told of a violent storm that washed Joseph's dory from the harbor up to his yard. The dory came to rest beside his colorful flower garden, which the storm had devastated. Apparently, for safekeeping, some passerby had placed those upturned flowers with their clinging soil in the now stranded dory. Joseph planned to have those flowers sent off the next day to cheer up others who had suffered in the storm. But that night, Joseph died. In Joseph's memory, his parishioners tended that unusual flower-filled boat and re-seeded it each year. They called it "Joseph's Boat" and soon found that others like it were beginning to appear in yards all around the Cape.<sup>25</sup> Joseph died on May 24, 1723.<sup>26</sup> His grave is in Falmouth's Old Burying Ground.<sup>27</sup>

### **Rev. Josiah Marshall, 1724–1730**

Josiah Marshall<sup>28</sup> was born in Braintree, Massachusetts, in 1700. He was a 1720 graduate of Harvard College, where he also earned his Master's degree. In 1724, our church nominated Josiah to be its minister, and the town agreed. Josiah accepted the call and was ordained on August 19, 1724.<sup>29</sup> In 1726, he married Hannah, the daughter of Benjamin Hatch of Falmouth. This proved to be an unfortunate union. In time, Josiah claimed that Hannah led a group in the congregation against him. A council called from area churches examined the situation and advised Josiah to resign from our church, which he did.

Hannah then complained to the courts that Josiah was squandering her father's estate. This led to Josiah's temporary arrest. Unable to secure another church position in Massachusetts, Josiah is said to have gone to North Carolina to become an Anglican priest, but he failed to be accepted. He then returned to Massachusetts, supporting himself by teaching school. Both Josiah and his wife tried to secure a divorce, but the courts never granted it. Commenting on that situation, the sketch of Josiah in "Sibley's Harvard Graduates" concluded that,

*The refusal of the courts to grant a decree in a case uncomplicated by children (the one child had died) indicates that they thought there was too much to be said on both sides.*

It is not known what eventually became of Josiah or exactly when he died.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, the records of our church during the ministries of Rev. Metcalf and his successor, Rev. Marshall, have long been missing.<sup>31</sup>

### **Rev. Samuel Palmer, 1731–1775**

Samuel Palmer was born in 1707 in Middleborough, Massachusetts. He was the son of Rev. Thomas Palmer, a minister who had been discharged from his church in Middleborough for immorality and intemperance. Samuel's father then turned to the practice of medicine and preaching to those parishioners who still followed him.

Samuel graduated from Harvard College in 1727. He also earned his Master's degree

there.<sup>32</sup> In 1731, he accepted the call to become our Falmouth church's minister and was ordained that year on November 24. At the time, our church people were still healing from all the personal problems associated with their former minister, Josiah Marshall. As it turned out, Samuel had a very stable and successful ministry in our church for forty-four years. At a time when inflation was high, the town still voted him a substantial bonus in appreciation of his work. Perhaps he had learned a lot from his father's problems? And, like his father, Samuel also practiced medicine. He served Falmouth as both a minister and a physician. It is worth noting that the very first person received into full Communion with the church during Samuel's ministry was "Kuffee, ye Negro-Man-Servant of Deacon Parker."<sup>33</sup>

At our church's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1908, a former minister of our church, Rev. Charles Washburn, presented an account of our church's history, which included the following story about Samuel Palmer from our church's records. As Washburn said:

*The case of one Prudence Parker discloses the peculiar trials that young and unmarried ministers were subjected to in those early as well as these later days. It was adjudged by the church that she walked disorderly, that she perverted the Scriptures to justify her strange carriage and speech and behavior when she pretended to love the pastor. She was deprived of the Communion because of her wild and extravagant notions. Finally, the young pastor plainly told her that he was about to marry another, Miss Mercy Parker of Boston. Instead of hearkening to his counsels she broke out into reviling language, and told him that if he did, he was as bad as the devil; and the devil would have him, and that the hottest place in 'Sheol' would be his portion. She would not hear any sense, and was barred from Communion. She would not reply to the church, but insisted upon perverting the Scriptures and continued coming to the Communion, saying 'The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.' Her conduct was so strange that the church did not know what to do with her. She went over to the Tisbury Communion, but was exhorted not to partake there. Twenty years after (in 1759) she made a public confession before the church and was accepted.<sup>34</sup>*



Rev. Samuel Palmer's gravestone  
Falmouth's Old Burying Ground

Samuel Palmer is said to have had a black slave named Titus, whose humorous complaint, known about town, was that Samuel was so devoted to his pipe that it made him absent-minded and a poor hand at the plow. Records of the church that have survived begin with those kept by Samuel. They indicate that in 1773 Samuel made a confession to the church regarding his drinking, which some parishioners were concerned about. That confession was unanimously and, apparently, satisfactorily

received.<sup>35</sup>

Samuel died in 1775, the result of an illness contracted while visiting a patient. It is said that he was much beloved by his parishioners. The epitaph on his gravestone in Falmouth's Old Burying Ground reads:

*His virtues would a monument supply, But underneath this stone his ashes lie.*<sup>36</sup>

Samuel served our Falmouth church much longer than any other minister of the church to date. During that forty-four year period, Samuel,

*solemnized 217 marriages, baptized 364 females and 433 males, administered the Lord's Supper 370 times, and received 227 persons into the church.*<sup>37</sup>

### **Rev. Zebulon Butler, 1775–1778**

Zebulon Butler<sup>38</sup> was born in Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard, in 1749. He graduated from Harvard College in 1770 and also earned his Master's degree there. Once, he missed twenty-six days of college because he chose to travel home and back to Harvard by the full water route, which had to round Cape Cod. In his Master's work, Zebulon argued this thesis:

*It is the Construction of the Organs of the Body which Makes all the Difference between an Idiot and a Wise Man.*

Zebulon may have worked briefly as a missionary with the Tuscarora Indians until the Revolutionary War broke out. He was called to our church and ordained on October 18, 1775. In 1778, Zebulon's request to be dismissed from our church was accepted.<sup>39</sup> It likely was not easy for him to follow a long and successful pastorate like that of Rev. Palmer. Yet, a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century chronicler of Falmouth history indicated that serious allegations made against Zebulon were involved in his leaving.<sup>40</sup> It is very unusual that between Zebulon's ordination in 1775 and a church meeting to consider his request to leave in 1778, only one entry appears in the church's records.<sup>41</sup> Also, only one person joined the church during his ministry. That individual joined on the day of Zebulon's ordination, the same day Zebulon joined the church.<sup>42</sup>

Evidence in the records of the town and church suggests that the First Congregational Society of Falmouth came into existence at least by 1777, during Zebulon's ministry.<sup>43</sup> After leaving Falmouth, Zebulon settled in Nantucket, where he became a school teacher and manufactured snuff. He died in Edgartown in 1790, leaving "a good library in the languages."<sup>44</sup>

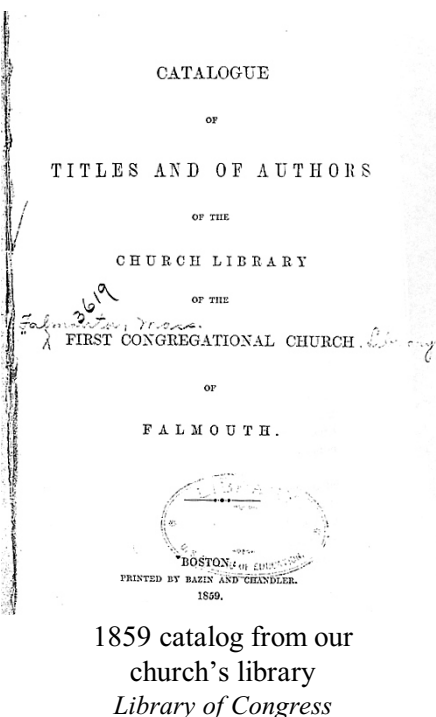
### **Rev. Isaiah Mann, 1780–1789**

Isaiah Mann was born in Scituate, Massachusetts, in 1759. He was a 1779 graduate of Harvard College. Isaiah agreed to serve our church for a £160 settlement, £80 salary and the use

of the parsonage lands. The first attempt to ordain Isaiah was thwarted because the Revolutionary War interrupted postal service, and the certificate of his dismissal from church membership in Scituate was not received by the Council, which was to ordain him. The same thing happened a second time, but the ordination took place on January 19, 1780, with the understanding that the certificate would arrive. And finally, it did, in March.<sup>45</sup>

In 1784, during Isaiah's ministry, the church voted "to begin public worship on the Lords day, by Reading some part of the holy Scripture." Also, the church made plans to purchase a Bible for public use.<sup>46</sup>

In 1786 the Falmouth church, along with twelve other Congregational churches on the Cape at the time, became beneficiaries of the residue of the real and personal estate of Dr. Abner Hersey of Barnstable. The deacons of those churches were to manage that estate. And the profits realized from it each year were to be spent on books, some specified in Hersey's will and others [after a century had passed] to be chosen by ministers of those churches as they "shall think most conducive to the interests of religion and virtue." Using proceeds from this bequest, our Falmouth church eventually developed a church library, which became an important part of our church's ministry for many years.<sup>47</sup> Note our library catalog to the right.



Isaiah died in 1789.<sup>48</sup> Apparently Rev. Mann's ministry was very much appreciated by his parishioners and townspeople, according to the following tribute carved on his gravestone in Falmouth's Old Burying Ground:

*Those gifts and graces filled his heavenly mind,  
Which made him loved, revered by all mankind,  
He wisely taught his little flock his road  
To glory, honour, happiness and God.  
He lived and died a man of virtuous life,  
Lamented by his people, friends, and wife,  
Peace to his sacred dust which here must lie.  
Till roused to re-unite the soul in yon ethereal sky.<sup>49</sup>*

## ENDNOTES

1. Franklin Bowditch Dexter, ed., *Extracts from the Itineraries and Other Miscellanies of Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D., 1755–1794 With a Selection From His Correspondence* (New Haven: Yale

University Press, 1916), 262; Charles Edward Banks, *The History of Martha's Vineyard, Duke's County, Massachusetts* (Edgartown: Duke's County Historical Society, 1966), 151.

2. Robert Charles Anderson, *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England 1620–1633*, Great Migration Study Project (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1995), 1:599.

3. Nathaniel B. Shurtleff and David Pulsifer, ed., *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England [PCR], 1855–61* (New York: AMS Press, 1968), 8:32.

4. Arthur R. Railton, "The First 30 Ministers of the First Church (1642–1878)," *The Dukes County Intelligencer*, May, 1992, Vol. 33, No. 4, 181.

5. Charles Edward Banks, *The History Of Martha's Vineyard, Dukes County, MA in Three Volumes* (Edgartown: Dukes County Historical Society, 1966), 2:150–152; Arthur R. Railton, 179–182.

6. I use this picture courtesy of Chris Baer, "Tower Hill Cemetery Gravestones: Rev. Jonathan Dunham," Tower Hill Cemetery: Also Called Old Burying Ground and Burial Hill. <http://history.vineyard.net/cemetery/th/th31.htm>

7. Falmouth Town Records indicate that on October 25, 1700, the town voted to pay 15-00-0 to "Mr. Shaverick" for his services that year. Rev. Enoch Pratt listed Samuel Shiverick as having labored in Falmouth "as a minister, previous to 1700." See Rev. Enoch Pratt, "Complete List of the Congregational Ministers in the County of Barnstable, Ms., from the Settlement of the County to 1843 and Notes on the Preceding Tables," *American Quarterly Register*, August 1842, 67.

8. Since at least the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Samuel Shiverick was believed, mistakenly, to have been the first settled minister in Falmouth. In fact, that is stated in the January 1860 edition of the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, Vol. 14, 15. An article therein entitled "Judge Sewall's Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard Memoranda, 1702," mentions Rev. Shiverick, then adds this footnote:

*Rev. Samuel Shiverick, a Huguenot, was the first settled minister at Falmouth. He has descendants residing in Falmouth, Dennis, &c.—MS Letter of Amos Otis, Esq.*

Jonathan Dunham's service in the community before Shiverick was long overlooked.

9. Charles W. Jenkins, *Three Lectures in the Early History of the Town of Falmouth Covering the Time From Its Settlement to 1812 Delivered in the Year 1843*, (1889) 58. Jenkins stated that Samuel Shiverick "graduated at Cambridge in 1703." I have found no record of that. However, Shiverick's ministerial successor in Falmouth, Rev. Metcalf, graduated from Harvard in 1703.

10. *Rochester, Massachusetts Church Records*, taken from a typewritten copy in the possession of the New England Historical Genealogy Society in Boston, 1. In 1686, Sippican became incorporated as the town of Rochester. In 1852, that part of Rochester which had been Sippican, became incorporated as Marion.

11. *From Ministers Rock to The Meeting House, 1683–1941* (Marion, MA: First Congregational Church of Marion) gives this description:

*This region was known as 'Lands of Sepecan' which had been the name of an Indian village lying between the two harbors. A huge rock, said to have been the place of various powwows, now known as Ministers Rock, was used as a pulpit.*

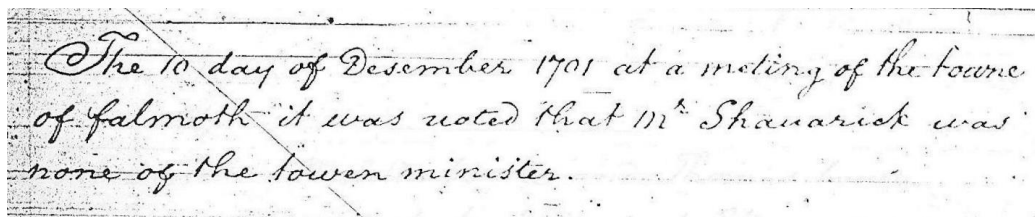
12. As author Alice Austin Ryder noted:

*In 1683 there were sixty families and a small meeting house had been built near the 'Rock' on Little Neck, and Samuel Shiverick, a Huguenot who had fled from France, was asked to preach. Shiverick is sometimes called the 'Mete Man,' sometimes the 'meek man.' Perhaps as he went about collecting the shillings for his pay he was 'meek.' They raised a house for him and gave him the use of 'the ministry lands,' 'ten akers of upland' about his house, and he planted and plowed and got in his 'hey,' and so made a living.*

Alice Austin Ryder, *Lands of Sippican on Buzzards Bay* (New Bedford: Reynolds Printing, 1934), 53.

13. Donald G. Trayser, *Barnstable: Three Centuries of a Cape Cod Town* (Hyannis, Massachusetts: F.B. & F. P. Goss, 1939), 41.

14. Histories of Falmouth often say that on December 10, 1701, the town of Falmouth voted to dispense with the services of Mr. Shiverick. Likely, that is based on the early Falmouth town record, which, if interpreted correctly, says, "it was voted that Mr. Shavarick was none of the town minister."



Falmouth Town Record, December 10, 1701 Town Meeting [from microfilm]

Is that record of the proceedings that day or that interpretation of that record correct? I wonder. I will note that when our Falmouth church published its *Articles of Faith, and the Covenant* in 1851, that publication specifically gave the following interpretation of that town meeting:

*On the 10<sup>th</sup> day of December, 1701, the town being orderly assembled together, it was voted that Mr. Shiverick was now of the town, minister.*

That interpretation of the vote that day seems to fit with other early town records regarding Shiverick. It seems likely that Rev. Shiverick began preaching in Falmouth before 1700.

As Falmouth Town Records indicate: On April 3, 1700, Shiverick affirmed, in a witnessed statement, his contentment with his compensation from the town for his past services. On August 6, 1701, the town voted its interest in securing a suitable person to preach the gospel.

Presumably, the town's ultimate goal was to secure an ordained minister, which Shiverick was not. It's possible [using the 1851 interpretation above] that on December 10, 1701, the town formalized its relationship with its lay preacher, Shiverick, making their relationship a legal one in

accordance with Province law, such that he was now the town's official "Minister," though he had already been preaching in town for years. At this point, the town likely recognized that Shiverick's service to Falmouth would continue only until an ordained minister could be secured. That pattern was similar to the one Shiverick experienced previously in Sippecan. Support for that 1851 interpretation might be found in the "Itineraries" by Dr. Ezra Stiles, President of Yale. As Stiles specifically said of Shiverick and Falmouth:

*Mr. Saml. Shivorick settled by Agreemt. & lawfully the Town's Minister; but upon Mr. Metcalf's comg., by mutual Agreemt. He & the To. discharged of mutual Obligation.*

If Stiles was correct, that seems to suggest that Shiverick may have maintained the official title of the town's "Minister" until Rev. Metcalf came. And perhaps that title was maintained even if, years before, the town had stopped paying him to preach regularly. See Dexter, ed., 262.

On November 20, 1702, the town voted to tax its citizens to raise the money it owed Shiverick for his ministerial services that year—his "yearly maintenance." At that same meeting, the town's continuing effort to settle a minister of the gospel was also discussed. One wonders: if Shiverick really was none "of the town minister" as of December 1701, as that record has often been interpreted, then why did the town have a "yearly maintenance" to pay him near the end of 1702? That doesn't seem to follow.

It was recorded at a town meeting on February 3, 1702/03, that "thay did a gre that thay would not imply Samuell Shivorick any more to preach to tham . . ." They also agreed that they would reckon with him "for what he had done this last somar and this wintar." As our church's 1851 *Articles of Faith, and the Covenant* indicated, that meeting actually took place in 1703, as reckoned by modern calendars. Though, as of 1703, the town no longer employed Shiverick to preach, he apparently remained in the community and helped with the gathering of our church and the settling of our first ordained minister, Rev. Metcalf. As Dr. Stiles seems to have implied in his statement quoted above, that transition went smoothly.

15. One wonders why Falmouth no longer wanted Shiverick's preaching. It's possible that the town's desire for an ordained minister became so strong that it reached a point when it was no longer willing to employ a lay preacher. In early New England, a distinction was made between a church's covenant members and its congregation. Virtually everyone in a town who did not espouse another religion was considered part of their town church's congregation. It's possible that Falmouth residents who were covenant members of the Barnstable church, as Shiverick was, may have viewed Shiverick's ministry in Falmouth positively. In contrast, Falmouth residents in Shiverick's congregation who were not members of any church may have viewed Shiverick more negatively. And likely, there were more Falmouth town voters [men] in the latter category than in the former one.

Another possibility is that Shiverick had a French accent, which made his preaching difficult to understand by English colonists. Another possibility is that some people in Falmouth at that time harbored negative feelings toward immigrants from France. As the American Historical Association's *Surnames in the United States Census of 1790: Analysis of National Origins of the Population* (Genealogical Publishing Co., 1971) stated on page 384:

*In the popular colonial mind the fact that the Huguenot was a Protestant was overshadowed by the more evident fact that he was a Frenchman. National intolerance was a characteristic of the period of wars between 1689 and 1713 as it has been of any*



*later era of wars. The colonists of that generation associated with the French the massacres on their frontiers, their economic difficulties, and all the hardships and restrictions of military service. Not only every stranger but even the most peaceful neighbor who spoke French was a possible spy and a potential accomplice of skulking savages . . . In Massachusetts Bay, when strange Frenchmen were noted walking at large in the town of Boston, the council ordered that all such must report to the sheriff to give an account of themselves, and all loyal subjects were strictly forbidden to harbor them.*

16. Frederick Freeman, *The History of Cape Cod: The Annals of the Thirteen Towns of Barnstable County* (Boston: Printed For the Author, 1862) Vol. II, 437.

17. Freeman, 435.

18. Samuel Sewall Jr., "A Journal of Proceedings to Martha's Vineyard From October 2, 1712, to October 15<sup>th</sup>," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, Vol. 18, January 1864, 75.

19. Freeman, 437, footnote 1.

20. "Joseph Metcalf," Class of 1703, Clifford K. Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates: Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College in the Classes 1701–1712* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1937), Vol. V, 220–223.

21. Jenkins, 62.

22. Dexter, ed., 262.

23. An example is found in *Acts and Resolves of Province of Massachusetts Bay* (Boston, 1869–1922) IX, 356. In that instance Rev. Joseph Metcalf was granted the sum of Twenty Pounds in response to his petition which sought.

*consideration of the extraordinary Frowns of Heaven by Worms & Drought on the Labours of the Town whereby they have been disabled from Affording a necessary Maintenance to the Petitioner . . .*

24. Freeman, 442–443. See also Karen Allen, "Joseph's Boats," *Spritsail*, Vol. 13, Number 1, Winter 1999, 10–18.

25. Allen, 10–18; Elizabeth Reynard, *The Narrow Land* (The Chatham Historical Society, 1978), 313–317.

26. As the *Boston News-Letter* of June 6, 1723, noted:

*Falmouth, May 27, Last Friday the 24<sup>th</sup> of this Instant, dyed here (to our great Loss) the Reverend Mr. Joseph Metcalf, Pastor of the Church in this Place, Aged 41 years in April last; and hath left his Widow with Eight Female Children.*

However, when Mrs. Metcalf petitioned the court for help in 1725, after her husband's death, she noted just seven children, though one may have died in the interim. *Acts and Resolves of Province*

of *Massachusetts Bay* (Boston, 1869–1922) X, 619.

27. In 1843, Charles W. Jenkins noted that there was no gravestone to mark Rev. Metcalf's grave in Falmouth's Old Burying Ground. A footnote on that page written by Edward H. Jenkins, who secured Charles' lectures and saw that they were published in 1889, adds the following:

*As soon as attention was called to the matter by this statement, a marble slab was placed at Mr. Metcalf's grave, bearing the following inscription: 'Sacred to the memory of the Rev. Joseph Metcalf, the first pastor of the Congregational church, in this town, who died Dec. 24, 1723, in the 42<sup>nd</sup> year of his age and the 16<sup>th</sup> of his ministry. [E.H.J.]*

Jenkins, 67.

28. "Josiah Marshall," Class of 1720, Clifford K. Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates: Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College in the Classes 1713–1721* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1942), Vol. VI, 390–392.

29. *Boston News-Letter*, August 27, 1724. In a publication of our Falmouth church in 1851 it was stated, likely mistakenly, that Rev. Marshall was ordained on February 26, 1724. *Articles of Faith, and the Covenant of the First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Mass. With a List of the Members* (Boston: Press of T. R. Martin, 1851), 5.

30. J. M. Bumsted, "A Caution to Erring Christians: Ecclesiastical Disorder on Cape Cod, 1717 to 1738," *William and Mary Quarterly*, July 1971, Third Series, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3., 413–438. Also, on page 436, Bumsted suggests that there were so many difficulties with some of the churches and clergy on the Cape in this period, including the difficulty with Rev. Marshall, that when the Great Awakening came in the 1740s, most of the Cape's churches and clergy repudiated any aspect of that movement appearing on the Cape which was "smacking of censoriousness, itinerancy, schism, and doctrinal error . . . [for] one crisis of ecclesiastical disorder in a generation was enough."

31. If Rev. Josiah Marshall was responsible for keeping the church's records, as his successor, Rev. Samuel Palmer, was, one can wonder if Rev. Marshall took the church's records with him when he resigned his ministry and left Falmouth.

32. "Samuel Palmer," Class of 1727, Clifford K. Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates: Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College in the Classes 1726–1730* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1951), Vol. VIII, 244–246. Another sketch is found in Jenkins, 68–76. A more recent sketch is Leonard Miele's "The Life of Reverend Samuel Palmer," *Spritsail*, Volume 20, Number 1, Winter 2006, 18–27.

33. *FCC1*, 2. Kuffee was propounded for full Communion on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1731/2, and he was baptized and received into full Communion on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1731/2. In church records, this individual's name also appears spelled as "Cuffee." Slavery was not legally ended in Massachusetts until the 1780 adoption of its Constitution, which stated that "All men are born free and equal," and the rulings of subsequent court cases in the early 1780s, which interpreted

that Constitution to mean that slavery was illegal. See Massachusetts Historical Society, "African Americans and the End of Slavery in America," <http://www.masshist.org/endofslavery/?queryID=54>

34. Rev. Charles H. Washburn, "Historical Address Covering the 200 Years History of the First Congregational Church in Falmouth, Mass." *Two Hundredth Anniversary, 1708–1908, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts, October 11, 12, and 13, 1908* (1908), 24–25. See *FCC1*, August 22, 1739, 9–11; May 20, 1759, 46.

35. *FCC1*, March 31, 1773, 80, contains the following entries written by Rev. Samuel Palmer concerning his drinking:

*March 31. A Church meeting called at ye Desire of some of ye Brethren, yr being Dissatisfaction on account of my Drinking. I offered to them a confession & after some Discourse, ye meeting was adjourned to April 14.*

*April 14. The Church met again. I delivered them a Confession in writing and withdrew, and after some Time of Consultation, The Deacons and another Brother came from ye Church & signified yr Agreement among themselves. Then I returned to ye meeting, & Read ye Confession, and the Brethren signified yr Acceptance of it by an Unanimous Vote; and ye next Day I read ye Confession to ye Congregational. A Coppy of it (at ye Table of ye Lord) delivered to Deacon Davis to keep.*

36. It is not commonly known that a great grandson of Samuel Palmer was a noted preacher in the South and a major apologist for slavery in that region. Rev. Benjamin Morgan Palmer was a Presbyterian minister in New Orleans. Shortly after Abraham Lincoln was elected the U.S. President, Benjamin preached a sermon, which subsequently circulated widely, and noted his belief that God had given the South the divine duty of maintaining slaves. Benjamin also expressed his support of the South's succession from the Union to protect that supposed duty.

When the Presbyterian Church split over the issue of slavery in 1861, Benjamin Palmer became the first moderator of the new Southern group, then called the Presbyterian Church of the Confederate States of America. Falmouth's Rev. Samuel Palmer had a son, Job, who settled in Charleston, South Carolina, before the Revolutionary War. Benjamin Palmer, born in Charleston in 1818, was Job's grandson. Thus, he was a great grandson of Rev. Samuel. See "Benjamin Morgan Palmer," *A Dictionary of Louisiana Biography* (1988), Vol. 2, 627; the *Ministerial Directory of the Presbyterian Church, U.S., 1861–1941*; "Benjamin Morgan Palmer, 1818–1902" by Thomas Cary Johnson in the *Library of Southern Literature* edited by Edwin Anderson Alderman, Joel Chandler Harris, et alia. [New Orleans: Martyn & Hoyt Co., 1909], Vol. IX (Murphey-Prentice), 3907–3933.

37. Washburn, 26.

38. "Zebulon Butler," Class of 1770, Clifford K. Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates: Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College in the Classes 1768–1771* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1975), Vol. XVII, 343–344.

39. *FCCI*, July 7, 1778, meeting, 93.

40. Jenkins, 100, in a footnote, noted the following:

*There were serious charges brought against Mr. Butler deeply involving his moral character. There was not sufficient evidence at the time to convict him, but the church feeling satisfied of the truth of the charges, his dismissal was voted in accordance with his request. These charges were afterwards found to be true.*

41. Up to the time of Rev. Butler's ministry, baptisms, administrations of the Lord's Supper, and the propounding and receiving of new members in full communion were listed in *FCCI* on nearly a Sabbath by Sabbath basis. With one exception—an entry concerning the scheduling of the Lord's Supper [*FCCI*, November 1776, 92]—such entries did not appear again until after Rev. Butler asked to be dismissed in 1778.

42. *FCCI*, October 18, 1775, 90.

43. See Chapter 16 – “Town, Church, and the First Congregational Society of Falmouth” in this book.

44. Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates, Classes 1768–1771*, Vol. XVII, 344.

45. *FCCI*, December 9, 1779 meeting, 97–99; January 19, 1780 adjourned meeting for Ordination, 99–100; March 5, 1780 meeting, 100; Freeman, 461, footnote 1.

46. *FCCI*, April 18, 1784, 109. Although Puritan sermons were based on the Bible, actually reading the Bible itself as a part of worship may have been a change for our Falmouth congregation in this period. As the famous Congregational minister Henry Ward Beecher wrote about his own childhood in early 19<sup>th</sup>-century New England:

*I was brought up according to the sternest, most literal Puritanic worship of New England, when the Bible was not read in church. Because the Episcopalians read the Bible so much in church the Puritans would not read it there at all. The ministers enjoined the people to read it at home, and so got more time for long sermons.*

Henry Ward Beecher, “Religious Anniversaries, Lecture Room Talk,” Wednesday Evening, Dec. 23, 1874, *The Christian Union*, Dec. 30, 1874. At the time, Henry was the editor of that newspaper.

47. Washburn, 28; *FCC2*, October 14, 1821, 142. It was voted that a church library should be created with income from the Hershey estate. The stipulation was that a book from it “should be kept out not exceeding two months.” A description of Dr. Hersey, his will, and the Cape Congregational churches that received his bequest and the percentages they likely received, is given in *Amos Otis and C.F. Swift (Reviser and Compiler). Genealogical Notes Of Barnstable Families Being a Reprint of the Amos Otis Papers, Originally Published in The Barnstable Patriot* (Barnstable, MA: F.B. & F.P. Goss, Publishers and Printers), Vol II, 1890, 7–16.

Hersey's will distributed his estate to the Cape Congregational churches in proportion to the amount of medical practice he did in each parish. His own church in the East Precinct of

Barnstable received 7/56 of his estate available to the churches. Our own Falmouth church received 4/56. Over time, expenses associated with Dr. Hersey's estate threatened to equal income. At that point, the deacons of the churches that were beneficiaries of that estate secured permission from the Massachusetts Legislature to sell it and then divide the proceeds in the proportions mentioned in Hersey's will. Apparently that was completed by 1818, for on March 11, 1818, our congregation voted for three members of our church "to hire out the Hersey donation money in the safest manner & best." *FCC2*, March 11, 1818, meeting, 135.

Dr. Hersey apparently was a very unusual person and physician, as indicated by the following characterization:

*Dr. Hersey was subject to hypochondriac affections, and in his domestic character he was eccentric in the extreme—a mere compound of caprice and whim. Domestic happiness and social intercourse were strangers to his family.*

Amos Otis and C. F. Swift, 7.

48. *FCC1*, April 20, 1789, 128.

49. Jenkins, 101.

## Chapter 4 – Our Church’s Clergy: 1790–1858

### Rev. Henry Lincoln, 1790–1823

Henry Lincoln was born in Hingham, Massachusetts, in 1765. He graduated from Harvard College in 1786 and studied divinity with Rev. William Shaw of Marshfield, Massachusetts.

Henry died on Nantucket in 1857, at the age of 91. An obituary prepared for him, as a Harvard alumnus, noted that Henry was the second oldest minister in the Commonwealth at the time of his death. It also gave this assessment of him:



Rev. Henry Lincoln  
Courtesy of Falmouth Historical Society

*Mr. Lincoln was a gentleman of the old school, of fine personal appearance, always remarkable neat in his dress, of an affable and social disposition, and, above all, a sincere Christian . . . He was a highly popular preacher, a fine speaker; and his sermons were characterized by sound, practical, good sense. Having finished the work which was given him to do, with a serenity of mind seldom witnessed, he calmly waited his summons, and gently passed away, like the twilight of a long summer’s day, into that solemn darkness which mortal eye cannot pierce, but which, to him, doubtless is lighted up by the radiance of a never-ending noon.<sup>1</sup>*

The following obituary, in the *American Congregational Year-Book For the Year 1858*, gives an extended account of Henry. It was written by a younger minister whom Henry deeply influenced.

*He graduated at Harvard College, in the class of 1786; entered the ministry, and was ordained pastor of the Congregational Church in Falmouth, Barnstable County, Ms.; the precise period unknown to the writer. Like many at that early day, in the Congregational ministry (especially was this true of the ministry of this county), he commenced preaching the gospel,—which was, indeed, another gospel,—without having experienced “the grace of the Holy Spirit” in his own soul. During the former part of his ministry, in common with his brethren in the vicinity, the theme of his preaching was not ‘Jesus Christ, and him crucified,’ but ‘do and live,’ when, to use the language of another, ‘the people neither did nor lived;’ the result of which was great declension from the faith and practice of the Fathers, and spiritual darkness, even darkness which could be felt.*

*But light arose in the midst of darkness. During the period intervening between 1810 and 1815, the Spirit was poured down from on high, and many were hopefully converted to a knowledge of Christ. Of the eighteen or twenty pastors of Congregational churches in the*

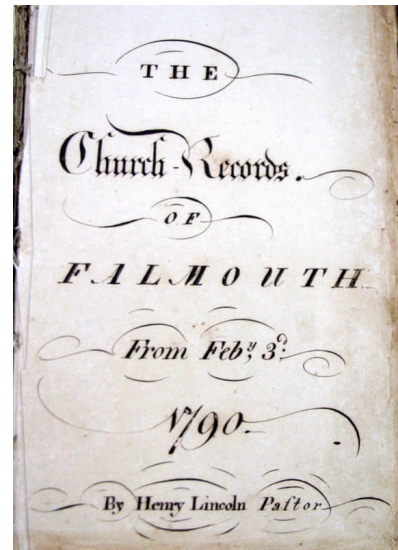
*county, six or seven became the recipients of the Grace of God, among whom was 'the venerable father,' who has recently gone to his rest 'in full age.'*

*The writer at the period to which allusion has been made, was a youth, preparing for college, and in connection with a religious hope, was joyful in the performance of the externals of piety, and in anticipation of heaven. But a sermon, which the now zealous Lincoln preached soon after his own conversion, in another county (and he truly preached in demonstration of the Spirit, and with power), utterly destroyed all his hopes and delightful anticipations of heaven; and his delusive hopes vanquished, conviction filled his heart, until he was, as he has now for years hoped, brought to experience the grace of God, and to expect salvation only through the blood of Christ. But for the sermon preached by the faithful Lincoln, under the circumstances to which allusion has been made, the writer might have preached another gospel than that which he hopes he has preached for more than thirty years.*

*The last interview enjoyed with this 'venerable father,' was nearly two years since. Though encompassed with the infirmities of age, his faith was strong, and his anticipations of heaven cloudless. On allusion being made to his entering the ministry and assuming the pastoral office, while unregenerate, he exclaimed with great seriousness, 'Ah! I was a blind leader of the blind.'<sup>2</sup>*

Not long after Henry came to our Falmouth church, it dropped its longstanding requirement that a person needed a conversion experience of God's saving grace in order to be eligible to become a full member of the church.<sup>3</sup> At that time, Henry was said to profess Arminianism, a theology that believed in human free will and the opportunity of humans, with God's help, to overcome their sin and obtain salvation. That theology contrasted sharply with the traditional Calvinism of early American Congregationalism, which stressed salvation by divine election and God's grace alone and the great need for individuals to have their souls regenerated through an experience of God's saving grace.

A number of Congregational ministers who espoused Arminianism in this early 19<sup>th</sup>-century period eventually described themselves as Unitarians. However, as the above writer noted, a number of Congregational ministers on Cape Cod, including Henry, had conversion experiences beginning in 1810 and afterwards. In most instances, the result of those conversions was that the churches of those ministers were brought back solidly into the mainstream of Trinitarian Congregationalism in that period.<sup>4</sup> No evidence has been found that our Falmouth church ever went so far as to drop its Trinitarianism. However, if Henry had continued down that Arminian path and not had his conversion experience, there would have been, I think, a very strong



possibility that our church eventually would have become a Unitarian church, as happened to so many other Congregational churches on the seaboard of Massachusetts in that period.

During the War of 1812, Henry's house was said to have been hit by seven cannon balls fired from the British warship *Nimrod* during its attack on Falmouth. Our church was also damaged some.<sup>5</sup> In 1817, our church voted to purchase land and build a small house on it for Sylvia Fish to "possess & improve it during pleasure . . ."<sup>6</sup>

During Henry's ministry, on June 20, 1821, the Second Congregational Church in Falmouth was gathered. It held its services at the East End Meeting House, which was still under the control of the First Congregational Society of Falmouth.<sup>7</sup>

Following Henry's death, Cape Cod's *Barnstable Patriot* newspaper reported a long-remembered anecdote about him. Apparently Henry had some strong preferences in politics and was not afraid to voice them. As the *Patriot* noted:

*Whilst engaged in the ministry in this county he was much respected and very generally known. One incident however is more frequently referred to in reference to his personal history than any other; and it is often spoken of in connection with the local memorial of former days. It is the following: At a fourth of July celebration, at Sandwich, in the days of Gov. Strong, at which it was understood that no party preference or topics were to be introduced, Rev. Mr. Lincoln so far forgot his proprieties, as to give the following sentiment:*

*'If Bidwell robs us of our treasure,  
And Skinner skins us without measure;  
How many men like these must follow  
To sink the chest and make it hollow.'*

*In reply to this sentiment, the Hon. Russell Freeman, a talented gentleman of Sandwich, immediately rose and gave the following impromptu sentiment:*

*'If it take nine tailors to make a man,  
Resolve this question, if you can:  
How many priests like parson Lincoln,  
Will make a saint that God will think on.'*<sup>8</sup>

Henry served our Falmouth church for thirty-three years, during which time he was said to have received 411 members into the church<sup>9</sup> and attended over 500 funerals.<sup>10</sup> Difficulties between Henry and Rev. Francis Whiting, a colleague pastor called by our Falmouth Church and the First Congregational Society in 1820 to help Rev. Lincoln ultimately led Henry to leave our church in 1823.<sup>11</sup>



### **Rev. Francis L. Whiting [colleague pastor], 1820–1823**

Francis Lane Whiting<sup>12</sup> was born in 1777 in Littleton, Massachusetts. He graduated from Dartmouth College in 1805 and studied theology with the noted Calvinist Congregationalist Dr. Jedidiah Morse in Charlestown, Massachusetts. From 1809 to 1817, Francis served as the minister of the Congregational church in Fryeburg, Maine.

It seems that Francis' ministry in Falmouth was subject to controversy from the beginning. At first, the Falmouth church voted not to call him to serve as a colleague pastor with Rev. Henry Lincoln. That vote was 14 in favor and 22 opposed. Then the church learned that the First Congregational Society of Falmouth had voted, fifty in favor and nineteen opposed, to call Francis.

Ideally in this period, a church and the society affiliated with it would agree upon which minister to call to serve the church. However, under Massachusetts law at this time, the legal authority to issue such a call was held by the society, not the church, in part because the church's minister also served the town and was supported through town tax dollars.

Learning of the society's vote, the church then met with Francis, with the result that the church urged the society to continue Francis' preaching among them only for one year. Francis rejected that proposal. The church then met again and voted, twenty-one in favor and nineteen opposed, for Francis to be called for a period of three years to help Rev. Lincoln. Then, the church met once again and took the same vote, with the result that eighteen were now in favor and fifteen were opposed. Although the church was deeply divided from the beginning on the prospect of Francis' ministry among them, and there was some division in the society as well, Francis decided—some would say very unwisely—to accept the call of the society and now the church.<sup>13</sup>

A contributing factor to the difficulties during Francis' ministry in Falmouth was tensions between residents of the West and East ends of Falmouth. At that time, some people living in the East End were working to develop their own congregation, which would be independent of our church in Falmouth's West End. In that period, the First Congregational Society of Falmouth was in control of both our meeting house in the West End and the East End Meeting House. The society met on October 6, 1823, and dissolved its relationship with Francis by not extending his three year call. At that time, the church sought and received a favorable recommendation for Francis from Henry Lincoln.

Sometime after Francis left Falmouth, he moved to New York State, where he became a Presbyterian minister. Also, it's been said that he served for nine years as a chaplain in the Army. It was reported that Francis was "a man of uncommon vigor and sound in the faith." He died in Big Flats, New York in 1863, in the 87th year of his age.<sup>14</sup> For more information on the difficulties between Lincoln and Whiting, see Chapter 10 – "Rev. Benjamin Woodbury: The Good Fight of the Faith" in this book.

### Rev. Benjamin Woodbury, 1824–1833

Benjamin Woodbury was born in New London, New Hampshire, in 1792.<sup>15</sup> He graduated from Dartmouth College in 1817. He studied divinity for some months in the class of 1824 at Andover Theological Seminary. He was ordained to serve our Falmouth church and society on June 9, 1824.<sup>16</sup>

On February 7, 1824, not long before Benjamin came to Falmouth, the Massachusetts Senate and House of Representatives assembled in General Court authorized the First Congregational Society of Falmouth, “to see and convey in fee simple, all the real estate of said society, consisting of the ministerial or parsonage lands thereof . . .” The proceeds from such sales were to be invested for “the support of the gospel ministry in said society.”<sup>17</sup> As Rev. Charles Washburn noted in 1908, “these lands comprised most of the territory between Shore Street and Falmouth Heights.”<sup>18</sup>



Rev. Benjamin Woodbury  
*Courtesy of Plain Congregational  
Church, Bowling Green, Ohio*

Shortly after Benjamin’s ordination in Falmouth, our church voted on June 24, 1824, to form the Sabbath School Union of Falmouth “for the purpose of promoting the interest of Christian education in the vicinity . . .”<sup>19</sup> During Benjamin’s ministry, the Temperance movement began to move through New England’s Congregational churches. In 1830, with leadership from Benjamin, our Falmouth church resolved that even the prudent drinking of alcohol was a grave sin.<sup>20</sup>

In 1833, members of our church living in North Falmouth sought to leave our church, in order to gather their own church in North Falmouth. The result was that the North Falmouth Congregational Church was gathered on August 15, 1833. Their founding members were twenty-three people from Falmouth’s First and Second Congregational churches who lived in the northwestern part of town.<sup>21</sup>

There were a number of tensions in the church during Benjamin’s ministry, including divisions that remained after the difficulties with Benjamin’s predecessors, Rev. Henry Lincoln and Rev. Francis Whiting. In 1833, by a close vote, the First Congregational Society decided to dissolve its relationship with Benjamin.<sup>22</sup> In the fall of that year, Benjamin left our church. In 1835, Benjamin and his family settled on the then frontier of America, at Plain, Wood Co., Ohio. He served there very successfully for many years as a self-sacrificing missionary of the American Home Missionary Society and a founder of churches, such as the Congregational church in Plain. Benjamin died in Plain in 1845, at age 53.<sup>23</sup>

### **Rev. Josiah Bent, 1834–1837**

Josiah Bent was from Milton, Massachusetts. He graduated from Harvard in 1822 and was ordained in 1824 to serve a Congregational church in Weymouth, Massachusetts. Josiah served our Falmouth church from 1834 to 1837. This was a period of significant transition because, by a vote on November 11, 1833, churches in Massachusetts were no longer legally able to be supported by town tax dollars. Massachusetts was the last New England state to adopt that separation of church and state. Prior to that legal change, many Massachusetts residents had viewed state support of churches as a civil matter—not a religious matter—which was important because it contributed to the public good.<sup>24</sup> Instead of receiving town taxes, in 1834, the First Congregational Society of Falmouth began taxing just its own members in order to secure the additional revenues it needed to support our church and its ministry.

At its December 27, 1836 meeting, the First Congregational Society of Falmouth resolved,

*that this meeting most sincerely regret that in the course of Divine Providence, the Rev. Mr. Bent should find the health of himself and family such as to make it necessary for him to ask a dismissal from this Society.*<sup>25</sup>

As Josiah had told the church and society, he sought his dismissal because of “the prejudicial influence of the sea air upon the health of his family.” In turn, the church resolved, “that they most deeply lament this loss.”<sup>26</sup> Josiah went to serve a church in Amherst, Massachusetts after leaving Falmouth. Unfortunately, he died there soon afterwards, in 1839, at the age of 42. A biographical sketch described Josiah this way:

*He was a good man and not less than 500 souls were hopefully converted during his ministry in the three parishes where he was settled.*<sup>27</sup>

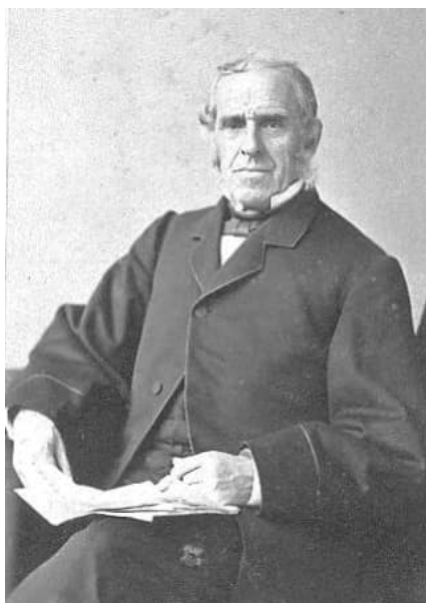
### **Rev. Dr. Henry B. Hooker, 1837–1858**

Henry Brown Hooker<sup>28</sup> was born in Rutland, Vermont, in 1802. He graduated from Middlebury College in 1821. He taught in Alabama in 1821–1822. He graduated from Andover Theological Seminary in 1825. That same year, he was ordained as an evangelist. From 1825 to 1826, he served a South Carolina congregation between Charleston and Savannah, which was mostly made up of black slaves. Henry was one of the first missionaries of the American Home Missionary Society, which was formed in 1825. He served the Congregational church in Lanesboro, Massachusetts from 1827 to 1836. He then came to our Falmouth church in 1837.<sup>29</sup>

As a preacher in Falmouth, Henry was described this way after his death:

*In the pulpit he was plain, direct, definite, faithful; not suppressing truth, but speaking severer truths as well as other truths in love; never affecting, and not often attaining high eloquence, but always preaching to the acceptance of sensible hearers. There was no*

*scolding of his people, nor of any one else. In the pulpit and out of the pulpit he seemed to be much of the same mind as John Wesley, who used to say, 'I dare no more fret than curse or swear.'*<sup>30</sup>



Rev. Dr. Henry Hooker

On January 3, 1849, during Henry's ministry, the Waquoit Congregational Church was gathered in Falmouth, with eighteen of its nineteen members having been former members of the Second Congregational Church of Falmouth, which worshiped at the East End Meeting House.<sup>31</sup>

In 1851, our church had the second-highest number of members of all the Congregational churches on Cape Cod and the Islands. The Nantucket church was the highest with 357 members. Our church had 212 members, and Wellfleet had 201 members.<sup>32</sup>

In 1857, Henry received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Middlebury College. That same year, our church was moved from the Village Green and rebuilt in its current location.

Henry left our church in 1858 and went to serve as the Secretary of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society, a position he held until 1873. That society was a predecessor of today's Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ. During his ministry, Henry wrote numerous religious tracts, including "A Sad Ruin," "The Obscure Disciple," and "Funeral of the Soul," which were published by the American Tract Society of Boston. He authored Sunday School books such as "Plea for the Heathen" and "Put Off and Put On." Henry also served on the Massachusetts Board of Education.

In his 1908 address on the history of our church, Rev. Charles Washburn, a former minister of our church, related the following tribute to Henry, which had been written by "a beloved fellow-minister" of Henry:

*How warm hearted he seemed among his people . . . Then came his preparatory lecture which was really no lecture at all. Two or three persons were examined by him, before all, for admission to the church, and in connection with his questions and their replies, and his comments, we had a season exceedingly touching. It seemed as if the everlasting door had been lifted up and the King of Glory had come in. I think I never knew a minister of whom it could be more truthfully said that 'he allured to brighter worlds and led the way.' He seemed to be like the disciple who leaned on Jesus at the Table as a confidential friend.*<sup>33</sup>

Washburn also noted that,

*it was a marked omission when Dr. Hooker did not remember ‘the men who go down to the sea in ships’ in his private and public prayers.*<sup>34</sup>

In 1903, the local newspaper printed the following about Rev. Hooker:

*In leaving Falmouth to accept the secretaryship of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society, his loss was deeply felt and regretted, not only by the society with which he had been connected for nearly a quarter of a century, but by the whole community. His gentlemanly deportment and liberality of sentiment towards all who differed from him in theological views, secured for him the admiration and esteem of men of all opinions. Always being in harmony with his people, he was eminently successful in preserving them from the discords and divisions so incident to large societies, and in the discharge of those peculiar obligations of a Christian minister, well deserved the beautiful description of Goldsmith: ‘In duty prompt at every call, He watched, and wept, and prayed, and felt for all.’*<sup>35</sup>

Henry Hooker died at Roxbury, Massachusetts, in 1881.<sup>36</sup>

## ENDNOTES

1. Joseph Palmer, *Necrology of Alumni of Harvard College, 1851–52 to 1862–63* (Boston: J. Wilson and Son, 1864), 106–107.
2. *American Congregational Year-Book For the Year 1858*. (New York: American Congregational Union, 1858), Vol. Fifth, 108–109.
3. FCC2, June 16, 1790, 125.
4. Joseph S. Clark, *God’s Remembrance of Bethel: A Discourse Preached Before the Barnstable Conference, at their Annual Meeting, in Orleans, December 19, 1855, Illustrating the Rise, Growth, Decline and Recovery of the Churches Composing that Body* (Boston: Press of T. R. Marvin, 1856), 26–29.
5. A newspaper reported that the attack took place on January 28, 1814, from noon into the night, amounting to about 300 cannons from their “32 pounders.” No one was hurt, but there was damage to about 30 buildings, including Rev. Lincoln’s house. “Falmouth Bombarded,” *The War*, Tuesday, February 8, 1814. See also: Rev. Elias Nason, *Gazetteer of the State of Massachusetts with Numerous Illustrations*, revised and enlarged by George J. Varney (Boston: B.B. Russell, 1890), 305; and Simeon L. Deyo, ed., *History of Barnstable County, Massachusetts* (New York: H. W. Blake & Co., 1890), 659.; Frederick Freeman, *The History of Cape Cod: The Annals of the Thirteen Towns of Barnstable County* (Boston: Printed For the Author, 1862), Vol. II, 466.

6. *FCC2*, September 5, 1817 meeting, 135. The land was purchased from Shubael Lawrence but previously belonged to Abraham Fish, who may have been Sylvia's husband. *FCC2*, October 21, 1818 meeting, 135. About one acre of the land purchased was kept for Sylvia's house to sit on, but the remainder was to be sold to help pay the expenses of building that house. *FCC2*, August 18, 1819 meeting, 137. It was voted that the balance due to the agents of the church for building Sister Sylvia Fish a house should be paid out of the Abner Hersey fund. For information on that fund, see Chapter 3 – "Our Church's Clergy: 1600s–1789," during the time of Rev. Isaiah Mann's ministry.

7. Frederick Freeman, 469. The June 20<sup>th</sup> date is also attested to in *The Barnstable Conference of Evangelical Congregational Churches; Comprising the Constitution of the Conference, Together with a Concise Historical Sketch of the Churches Based upon the Manual of 1848*, Revised and Brought Down to the Present Time (Yarmouthport: Press of the Yarmouth Register, 1866), 18.

8. *Barnstable Patriot*, Tuesday, June 2, 1857. Caleb Strong was the Governor of Massachusetts from 1800–1807 and 1812–1816. It's likely Lincoln's political references were to Barnabus Bidwell and Thomas J. Skinner, both of whom served in Massachusetts political offices when Caleb Strong was governor of the Commonwealth.

9. *Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, February 14, 1903.

10. Rev. Charles H. Washburn, "Historical Address Covering the 200 Years History of the First Congregational Church in Falmouth, Mass.," *Two Hundredth Anniversary, 1708–1908, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts, October 11, 12, and 13, 1908* (1908), 33.

11. For more information on Rev. Henry Lincoln's experiences in Falmouth, see Chapter 10 – "Rev. Benjamin Woodbury: The Good Fight of the Faith" in this book.

12. George T. Chapman, *Sketches of the Alumni of Dartmouth College, From the First Graduation in 1771 to the Present Time, With a Brief History of the Institution* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1867), 125.

13. *FCC2*, June 12, 1820–August 28, 1820, 138–139; *FCS2*. Numerous society meetings were held regarding Rev. Whiting from June 12, 1820 [*FCS2*, 43] through December 29, 1823 [*FCS2* 88]. *FCS2* is in the possession of the Falmouth Historical Society.

14. Emerson Davis, *Biographical Sketches of the Congregational Pastors of New England*, Vol. II (Chester to Hanover), 238. This is a typescript manuscript in the possession of the Congregational Library in Boston.

15. Edward J. Goodrich, *The Life of Rev. Benjamin Woodbury, a Home Missionary, and the Need and Object of Home Missions* (Oberlin, Ohio: Edward J. Goodrich, 1897); Chapman, 191. Goodrich said that Benjamin was born in Salisbury, New Hampshire, but other sources, including Chapman, indicate he was born in New London, New Hampshire.

16. FCC2, June 9, 1824 ecclesiastical council, 154.

17. “An Act to enable the First Congregational Society in the town of Falmouth to dispose of certain real estate,” February 7, 1824, Chapter 83, *Private and Special Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, from May 1822, to March 1830*, revised and published by the Authority of the Legislature, in Conformity to a Resolve, Passed April 16, 1836 (Dutton and Wentworth, 1837), 146–147.

18. Washburn, 48.

19. FCC2, July 14, 1824 resolutions, 155–158.

20. FCC2, May 1830 meeting, 175.

21. FCC2, July 21, 1833 meeting, 179–180; The Barnstable Conference of Evangelical Congregational Churches, 17.

22. FCS2, August 12, 1833 meeting, 153.

23. A more detailed description of Benjamin Woodbury’s experience in our church and later ministry in Ohio is found in Chapter 10 – “Rev. Benjamin Woodbury: The Good Fight of the Faith” in this book.

24. The Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 promoted the “public utility” view of state supported religion by declaring that “the happiness of a people, and the good order and preservation of civil government, essentially depend on piety, religion, and morality.” In the late 1700s and early 1800s, many Massachusetts citizens were inclined to hold Federalist views. As James H. Hutson wrote of the Federalists in that period:

*Most of the Federalists had been allied with or were in sympathy with the established churches of the colonial era; they subscribed to the limited, ‘spiritual’ conception of liberty of conscience and of a religious establishment, contending that both were confined to religious faith and practice and that religious taxation was an unrelated ‘civil’ matter, outside the orbit of both.*

James H. Hutson, *Church and State in America: The First Two Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 109, 154.

25. FCS2, December 27, 1836 meeting, 179.

26. FCC3, December 27, 1836 meeting, 103–104.

27. Emerson Davis, *Biographical Sketches of the Congregational Pastors of New England*, Vol. V (Sandown to York), 366–367. This is a typescript manuscript in the possession of the Congregational Library in Boston.

28. *The Congregational Year-Book, 1882* (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1882), 33; “Class of 1821,” *Middlebury College General Catalogue-Sesquicentennial Edition*, 1950; A.C.

Thompson, *Rev. Henry D. Hooker, D.D.: A Memorial Sketch* (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1881).

29. In 1837, Samuel L. Gould wrote a letter to Rev. Amos Phelps, which was published in Abolitionist William Garrison's newspaper called "The Liberator." In the letter, Gould speaks of traveling to Cape Cod and the region to give anti-slavery lectures. He reports the following:

*I gave four lectures in Falmouth. Opposing interests, however, were so strong, that I fear little good was accomplished by my labors. The Congregational minister, Rev. Mr. Hooker, refused to give any countenance to the discussion of this delicate subject among his people. (They are largely connected with the South, and many citizens of Falmouth spend their winters in the Southern States.) Mr. Hooker refused to read a notice for a lecture on the Bible doctrine concerning Slavery . . .*

According to Gould, Rev. Hooker later traveled up to North Falmouth to consult with people there, to prevent Gould from giving anti-slavery lectures in North Falmouth, but Hooker arrived too late there to accomplish his purpose. As he brought his letter to a close, Gould noted:

*Mr. Hooker requested me to make as kind a representation of his conduct as I could, and I have kept my word. He was peculiarly anxious to have nothing said of it to Mr. Garrison.*

Rev. Amos Phelps, to whom Gould's letter was addressed, published a book in 1834 entitled "Lectures on Slavery and Its Remedy." Specifically addressed to clergy, that book discussed slavery as a sin and called for immediate, complete, and universal emancipation.

I thank Mary Sicchio, Archivist of the Falmouth Historical Society, for discovering and bringing this published letter to my attention. Samuel L. Gould, "A Letter From Mr. Gould," Sandwich, Barnstable Co., Mass., July 22d, 1837, *The Liberator*, August 4, 1837.

The above account by Samuel L. Gould, if accurate, raises some questions about Rev. Hooker, our church, and Falmouth in that particular time period, many years before the Civil War. Though I am presently unable to answer those questions specifically, I can make the following comments, which may shed some light on the situation at that time.

1. In that general period, a number of Congregational clergy who were anti-slavery were not also full Abolitionists. Instead, such clergy supported the American Colonization Society, whose goal was to transport free American blacks back to Africa, and live there in their own independent colony. The ACS was directly associated with the colonization of Liberia, which became an independent state in Africa in 1847. Many clergy viewed such colonization as a moderate and peaceful solution to the American slavery problem. They also assumed, naively, as it turned out, that as the ACS made passage to Africa possible, many Southern slave owners would free their slaves to be sent there. In contrast, Abolitionists demanded the immediate end of slavery in the slaveholding states, a strategy those clergy rejected, as they viewed it as a radical solution that could entail violence and "the dismemberment and ruin" of the slave-holding states. See Jonathan D. Sassi, *A Republic of Righteousness: The Public Christianity of the Post-Revolutionary New England Clergy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 193–194.

Rev. Phelps, in his 1834 book noted above, also explained his reasons for abandoning the colonization scheme. He believed it was "an inadequate response" and did "not attack the evil [of slavery] directly." See Calvin Montague Clark, *American Slavery and Maine Congregationalists: A Chapter in the History of the Development of Anti-slavery Sentiment in the Protestant*



*Churches of the North* (Bangor, Maine: published by the author, 1940), 38.

It seems likely that Rev. Hooker supported the ACS approach to ending slavery in America, given the fact that at least as late as 1851, our Falmouth church was taking up a monthly missions offering to support the work of that colonization society. Apparently that was also our church's general approach to that concern at that time. *Articles of Faith, and the Covenant of the First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Mass. With a List of the Members* (Boston: Press of T. R. Marvin, 42 Congress Street, 1851), 28.

2. Prior to Rev. Hooker coming to Falmouth, the Barnstable Association of clergy [Congregational clergy from around the Cape and Islands] passed the following resolution on slavery at its August 15, 1835 meeting:

*Voted that the Association appoint a committee to draft a memorial to Congress, praying them to abolish slavery in the district of Columbia and in all the territory under their jurisdiction.*

The above is recorded in *Manuscript Records of the Barnstable Association*, a handwritten journal that contains records of the Association from its formation in Yarmouth on July 25, 1792, until its October 3, 1854 meeting in East Falmouth. That journal is in the possession of the Congregational Library.

3. An 1899 article in the local newspaper said the following:

*During the first half of the present century the middleaged and younger citizens of the town labored in the South, spending seven or eight months in South Carolina in their several avocations, and returning home for the summer months. Tradition says that prior to 1830 several hundred of the enterprising residents of Falmouth made their annual visits.*

*The Enterprise*, Vol., V, No. 6, Falmouth, Mass., Saturday, May 13, 1899.

30. Thompson, 8.

31. *The Barnstable Conference of Evangelical Congregational Churches*, 19.

32. "Statistics of the Churches," *Minutes of the General Association of Massachusetts at their Session in Wrentham, June 1851, With the Narrative of the State of Religion and an Historical Sketch of the Association* (Boston: Printer of Crocker and Brewster, 1851), 4. Brewster Association, 26. Vineyard Sound Association.

33. Washburn, 43.

34. Washburn, 43.

35. Robinson C. Bodfish, "Henry B. Hooker," *Falmouth Enterprise*, June 13, 1903.

36. For more detailed information on Dr. Hooker's experiences in Falmouth and subsequent life, see Chapter 12 – "We Remember Rev. Dr. Henry B. Hooker" in this book.

## Chapter 5 – Our Church’s Clergy: 1858–1900

### Rev. William Bates, 1858–1859

William Bates was born in Dedham, Massachusetts, in 1816. His father was Rev. Joshua Bates, D.D., a noted Congregational minister and President of Middlebury College in Vermont. William graduated from Middlebury College in 1837 and from Andover Theological Seminary in 1840. He was ordained in 1845 to serve the Congregational church in Northbridge, Massachusetts, where he stayed until 1858. It was said that during his time there “there was a revival which left scarcely a family untouched.”<sup>1</sup>

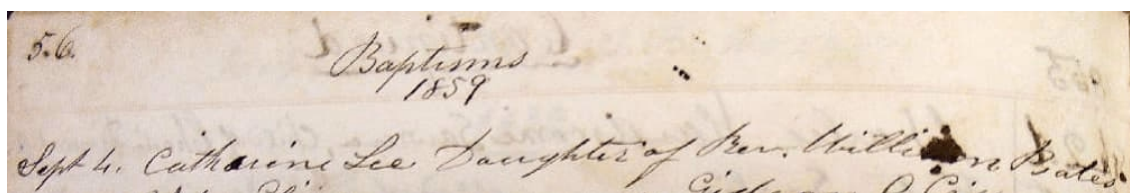


Rev. William Bates

William was installed in our Falmouth church on June 10, 1858.<sup>2</sup> Not much more than a year later, on September 10, 1859, he died at the age of 43 from a disease of his spine. A Cape Cod newspaper gave this report on his funeral:

*Rev. Dr. Hooker, [Rev. Bates’] predecessor, on Monday last preached the funeral sermon, to a congregation of five or six hundred. The church was draped in mourning, and the occasion was deeply touching and impressive. Mr. B. leaves a wife and several children.*<sup>3</sup>

At the time, their daughter Katharine Lee Bates, who later became famous for creating the words of “America the Beautiful,” was still just a baby in her mother’s arms, as Katharine was then only about a month old.<sup>4</sup>



Church Record of Katharine Lee Bates’ Baptism, September 4, 1859  
Her first name is spelled with a “C”

The state of medicine in those days is revealed in the following newspaper article from June 1859, which said:

*Mr. Bates, the Congregationalist Clergyman, has left his parish and gone into the country in quest of health. Three Sabbaths since he was compelled to close in the middle of his sermon, and during the following night such was the pain he suffered that he could*

*not sleep at all. We learn that the doctors affirm his disease to be in the neck and that it was caused by bathing too frequently in the pond, an exercise of which he was passionately fond.*<sup>5</sup>

In announcing William's untimely death, another Cape Cod paper said:

*Mr. Bates had many gifts of head and heart to fit him for the ministry; and came to this County with an established reputation for sincere and earnest piety, conservative steadfastness of faith and complete pastoral success. In the short time he ministered at Falmouth he won the respect and affection of his people, and the confidence of the whole community; and he had also earned the warm regard of his ministerial brethren, who looked upon him as a sound and discreet counsellor, and a genial companion.*<sup>6</sup>

### **Rev. James P. Kimball, 1860–1870**

James Parker Kimball was born in Townsend, Vermont, in 1828. James' father was Rev. James Kimball, a Congregational minister who was then serving the Congregational church in Townsend. The elder Kimball was noted for his love of the missionary cause and his daily prayers for the conversion of the whole world to Christianity. It was said that in his youth, the elder Kimball was acquainted with both Ann Judson and Harriet Newell, some of America's first foreign missionaries.



Rev. James Kimball

The elder Kimball was present in Bradford, Massachusetts in 1810, for the creation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1812 for the send-off of some of the ABCFM's first missionaries, including Ann and Harriet, as they set sail with their brand new husbands to India.<sup>7</sup>

James Parker Kimball, the elder Kimball's son, graduated from Amherst College in 1849 and Andover Theological Seminary in 1854. He served in Keokuk, Iowa, where he was ordained in 1857. He was installed in our Falmouth church on June 20, 1860. Given his father's dedication to missionary work, it's not surprising that during James' ministry in Falmouth, our church's

charitable giving was particularly strong. For example, at the church's annual meeting on December 30, 1864, it was reported that \$1,100.50 had been contributed to benevolence programs. In addition, three barrels of clothing for freed slaves, three barrels of valuable supplies for Civil War soldiers, and three barrels of clothes for the Seneca Indian Orphanage Asylum were collected.<sup>8</sup>

On behalf of our church, James attended the historic Congregational Council which met in Boston in June 1865, not long after the Civil War ended and Lincoln was assassinated.<sup>9</sup> That Council was said to be only the fourth time, since the Pilgrims landed in the New World, that Congregationalists across our land met in a general council—a national denomination of Congregationalists was not formed until 1871.<sup>10</sup> The members of that 1865 Council traveled from Boston to Plymouth one day. There, the Council presented the famous declaration known as the “Burial Hill Statement,” which begins with these words:

*Standing by the rock where the Pilgrims set foot upon these shores, upon the spot where they worshiped God, and among the graves of the early generations, we, elders and messengers of the Congregational churches of the United States in National Council assembled—like them acknowledging no rule of faith but the Word of God—do now declare our adherence to the faith and order of the apostolic and primitive churches held by our fathers . . .*<sup>11</sup>

A local newspaper reported that on July 4, 1865, not long after the Civil War ended, bells were ringing and the stars and stripes were floating over many homes in Falmouth. Also, the town gun was being fired on the Village Green, and “two beautiful flags were hung out of the belfry of the First Church.” In the midst of that celebration, Rev. Kimball presented a forty-five minute oration at Town Hall to the Falmouth community, which, as the newspaper said, was both “admirable” and “made more impressive by a manly delivery.” According to that account:

*After a comprehensive review of the war, the speaker proceeded to name some of the more important facts of that conflict. We know now, and the world knows, that we are a great and powerful nation. We have settled the question of self-government. We have settled also, that henceforth, we are to stand by the principles of the Declaration of Independence. Another trait of the war is the noble development of character it has called forth. Still another, the effect our struggle has had and must continue to have upon foreign nations. The greatest and best of these results, is, that, as a nation, we have learned our dependence on God.*<sup>12</sup>

In 1908, years after James’ death, he was described this way:

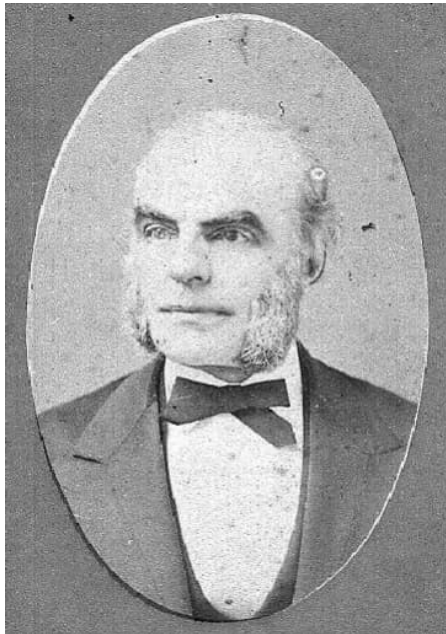
*As a preacher Mr. Kimball was plain, sound and intensely practical. He was a very successful pastor possessing good common sense and strong sympathies . . . Everybody liked Mr. Kimball, is the testimony of those who are living today. He was manly, and did fine work in the church.*<sup>13</sup>

In 1870, James left our church to serve a church in Haydenville, Massachusetts. The record of an Ecclesiastical Council that approved the dissolution of the relationship between James and our church indicated that our church was not able to pay “the increasing expense attending the pastor’s support.”<sup>14</sup> James remained in Haydenville until 1876. From 1876 until he became ill in 1880, he served as Secretary of the New England Branch of the American Tract

Society. From 1876 to 1881, James served as the Registrar of the state-wide group of Congregational ministers and churches called the General Association of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts. James died in Amherst, Massachusetts, in 1882, at the age of 53.<sup>15</sup>

### **Rev. Henry K. Craig, 1871–1888**

Henry Kinsman Craig was born in Augusta, Maine, in 1826.<sup>16</sup> He graduated from Bowdoin College in 1844 at the young age of 18. He taught at an Augusta high school for awhile, then studied for the ministry for one year at Bangor Theological Seminary, then two years at Andover Theological Seminary. Craig was ordained in 1855 to serve the Congregational church in Bucksport, Maine, where he remained until 1867. He came to our Falmouth church in 1871 after supplying the Congregational church in Norton, Massachusetts.



Rev. Henry Craig

In 1908, Rev. Charles Washburn, Henry's successor at our church, described Henry this way:

*He was a thorough scholar, his sermons being models of classic English. He was especially quick and tender in his sympathies, and possessed a fine poetic sensibility. His lines written for and published in the Boston Journal with reference to the 20<sup>th</sup> century are peculiarly appropriate today—*

*'O day of God, in man's arithmetic,  
A thousand years, thy dawn even now we see,  
We would be patient; strife brings victory!  
Stupendous, mighty deeds to-day our race  
Is witnessing. What must thy glory be  
Before thy end, O coming century?'*<sup>17</sup>

A number of changes took place in our church during Henry's ministry. For example, in 1874, our church voted to omit the sermon at Communion services.<sup>18</sup> In 1875, the church purchased the land and built a parsonage at 143 Palmer Avenue for its minister at a cost of \$4,000.<sup>19</sup> In 1879, our church voted that "unfermented wine be substituted for fermented at the communion."<sup>20</sup>

In 1882, parishioner Warren Nye Bourne died and left the sum of \$5,000 in his will for the purpose of helping the society pay the minister's salary. During the society's fiscal year of 1884–1885 the interest from Bourne's bequest amounted to about 13% of the society's total income for that year. Bourne had served as the captain of numerous whaling ships that sailed out of New Bedford.<sup>21</sup>

In 1887, our church finally took the significant step of recognizing women as full voting

members of our church. Age barriers for voting were done away with too. As adopted by congregation vote that year:

*henceforth in transacting the business of this church all members of the church in regular standing without distinction of age or sex be authorized to vote.*<sup>22</sup>



First Congregational Church  
Parsonage about 1875  
Rev. and Mrs. Henry Craig  
and daughter Eliza

In 1887, a Christian Endeavor Society was organized in our church for younger adults.<sup>23</sup> Also in 1887, Commonwealth law was significantly changed. Societies affiliated with churches were no longer allowed to raise funds by taxing their own members.<sup>24</sup> That legal change led many church societies, including our own First Congregational Society of Falmouth, to seek revenues instead from free pledges made by members of our society and church. At this time, women were still not allowed to be members of

our First Congregational Society, although they had been accepted as members of our church from the beginning.<sup>25</sup>

Rev. Craig resigned from our church in 1888 because of ill health. The church responded to his resignation, saying,

*it is our hope and prayer that a relief from the responsibility and care of so large a parish may result in his complete restoration to health, and that many years of usefulness in his chosen profession may yet be granted him.*<sup>26</sup>

However, the transition of our society and church from taxation to free pledging may also have played a role in Henry's decision to resign.<sup>27</sup> After serving our church, Henry purchased a farm in the Teaticket section of Falmouth. He then served as a supply minister for the Congregational churches in Hatchville [East End Meeting House], Waquoit, and Woods Hole.

In 1891, Henry purchased the Goodwin House in Falmouth Heights, which his family subsequently managed as an inn and expanded, under the successive names Craig House and Oak Crest Inn, for almost 75 years, long after Henry's death. That inn was demolished in 1978, and the land was bought by the town of Falmouth to create today's Oak Crest Park.<sup>28</sup>

Henry had a brother, Wheelock Craig, who served as a Congregational minister for many years in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Henry wrote a book about his brother entitled *Toil and Triumph, a Memorial of the Character, Work, and Closing Days of Wheelock Craig*. That book was published in 1870. Henry died in Falmouth in 1902 at 75 years of age, and his body was

buried in Falmouth's Oak Grove Cemetery.

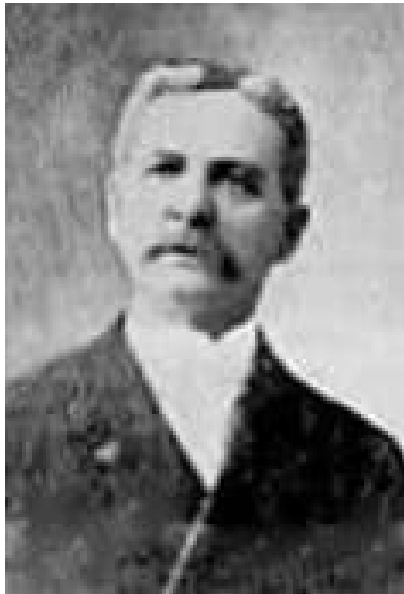
Henry had a son, also named Wheelock Craig, who was in poor health for a long time. That son ended his life in Falmouth's Siders Pond in 1919.<sup>29</sup> A tribute to Wheelock, then published in our local newspaper, made the following comments about his ministerial father:

*In quality and character Wheelock Craig was much like his father who was well known here. Rev. Henry K. Craig was a man with a vision of the possibilities of every day living. He had a great, tender heart. He was capable of being a power wherever he might be. That power within him drew about him people of strong character. While he was the pastor here there came to Falmouth such men as Samuel B. Capen, George Boynton, Barney Snow, Joseph Steadman, [Capen and Boynton were noted Congregationalists<sup>30</sup>] sent in advance to settle here for their summer homes.<sup>31</sup>*

### **Rev. Charles H. Washburn, 1890–1898**

Charles Henry Washburn<sup>32</sup> was born in Auburndale, Massachusetts in 1860. He graduated from Amherst College in 1883 and attended Andover Theological Seminary in 1883–84. He was ordained in 1885 to serve the Congregational church in Berlin, Massachusetts, where he remained until 1888. He then served Congregational churches in North Woburn and Burlington, Massachusetts, from 1888 to 1890. He then came to our Falmouth church in 1890 and stayed until 1898.

At his installation into our church on October 15, 1890, Charles presented a statement of his faith and ministry, which included these thoughts:



Rev. Charles Washburn

*It is a blessed privilege to preach the gospel of Christ, but it is a greater [privilege] to live the life of Jesus, to follow His example and be permeated by His Spirit. To do this, I recognize that the preacher must get inside the hearts of men. Contact always increases confidence and imparts strength. Earnest work develops friends and not unfrequently foes.*

*The religion I bring to Falmouth is based on evangelical truth, yet I trust it will be so large and liberal and full of Divine love as to welcome anyone of every denomination, as a friend and brother. I shall aim to simplify the Christian life. It is not hard to live the Christian life. 'Nothing is hardship to love and nothing is hard.' 'My yoke is easy, my burden is light.' In my work the pivot always has been and shall be – Jesus the Savior of Men.<sup>33</sup>*

It was in 1890, during Rev. Washburn's ministry, that Antoinette Palmer Jones, a younger adult and member of Christian Endeavor in our church, helped found "Floating Christian Endeavor" in Woods Hole. Particularly geared toward seamen, that organization became an international branch of the Christian Endeavor Society.<sup>34</sup>

In the summers of 1890 and 1891, Henry organized a religious campground called the Falmouth Summer Institute at Central Park in Falmouth Heights. Campers pitched their tents in the boys' or girls' section of the campground or stayed in nearby cottages or inns. Both gender groups were carefully supervised. The daily agenda of this program was summarized as follows:

*The philosophy of the Institute was 'to give a Christian tone and uplifting atmosphere to the camp.' The campers day began at 6:30 with Morning Prayers, followed by Drawing Class, Bible Lesson, Literature Class, Lecture, Music Class, Vesper Service and a final lecture at 8 p.m.*<sup>35</sup>

In 1891, during Charles' ministry, our sanctuary, then referred to as our audience room, was remodeled. A tin ceiling and moldings were installed. Among other changes, the platform in the pulpit area was redesigned, requiring the removal of a pew on either side of it.



The chancel after its 1891 remodeling

Charles left Falmouth in 1898 to serve as an associate pastor at Berkley Temple in Boston, Massachusetts. However, he soon moved on to other Massachusetts churches. He served the Congregational church in Maynard from 1899–1904, Trinity Church in Neponset from 1904–1914, Fowler Church in Fall River from 1914–1916, Linden Church in Malden from 1916–1922, and the Church of Christ in Burlington from 1922–1931.

Charles died in 1931 in Boston. Our local Falmouth newspaper paid a strong tribute to him after his death. As it said of Rev. Washburn:



*In the past thirty years he had maintained his friendships and affections in Falmouth to an unusual degree . . . A man of great energy, keen mentality, broad kindliness of spirit, Mr. Washburn left his mark upon Falmouth to an unusual degree. He was naturally a leader, with a talent for organization and a great tact that enabled him to undertake many projects of the community outside the sphere of his parish without creating friction.*

*Two books on Falmouth,<sup>36</sup> an exquisite poem written by Katharine Lee Bates at the request of Mr. Washburn,<sup>37</sup> the beautiful Mariners Memorial on Locust street remain as tangible evidence of the deep influence exercised by Mr. Washburn. He also is remembered vividly as the man who founded the first board of trade in Falmouth, organized Chautauqua lecture courses in the '90's that brought much of interest to the town; kindled a spirit of community pride and effort that has never died out . . .*

*He came to Falmouth when many old sea captains were still living and realized at once the value to the community of their world-wide experience and ability. Annually he dedicated one Sunday at his church to sea captains, reserving several pews to seat them together, decorating the church with nautical trophies, honoring in his sermon the life on the sea . . .*

## MISSIONARY CONCERT.



Subject, "The Seamen."

1891 All past and present seamen invited to take front seats

Missionary Sailor Service in our church  
7 P.M. – February 1, 1891

*Practically all the editorial labor in the two books . . . was done by Mr. Washburn . . . It would be difficult to think of another man who in eight short years gave so much of himself to the community and achieved an influence that remained vigorous and living during thirty years of absence from the town. The older people of the church agree that for outstanding ability and accomplishment in the pastorate it is necessary to go back to Rev. Henry B. Hooker (1837–58) to find a minister to match with Mr. Washburn.<sup>38</sup>*

### Rev. Edgar T. Pitts, 1898–1900

Edgar Thomas Pitts<sup>39</sup> was born in New Portland, Maine, in 1853. He was a son of Rev. Orvin Pitts, a Free Baptist minister. Edgar graduated from Bates College in 1881 and was ordained in Limington, Maine, in 1882. He served there until 1884. He then went to serve a church in West Portland, Maine, until 1885. Edgar then came to Massachusetts, where he served the Church of the Pilgrimage in Plymouth from 1885–87. He then served in Weymouth from 1887–89, and in Everett from 1889–95. The Everett church was said to be his "most successful pastorate" though ill health forced him to resign from there. After his resignation, Rev. Pitts worked as editor of the Lowell Daily Mail and was also the acting pastor of a Baptist church in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

In 1898, Rev. Pitts came to serve our Falmouth church and remained there until 1900. In 1908, his relatively short ministry in our church was described this way:



Rev. Edgar Pitts

*Mr. Pitt's term as acting pastor was brief yet it was full of earnest evangelistic undertaking and most eloquent preaching. Conservative in his theology, his sermons were spiritual and intensely interesting. His delivery is remembered as fine.*<sup>40</sup>

While in Falmouth, Edgar offered vocal and physical training lessons. An ad in the local newspaper at that time showed his picture and said:

*As Mr. Pitts has been under the instruction of some of the best teachers in New England, notably Prof. S.S. Curry, of the Boston School of Expression, he believes he is prepared to give satisfaction. Terms: 50 cents per lesson, or 20 lessons for \$10.00*<sup>41</sup>

At a special meeting, our church approved the following statement,

*In accepting the resignation of our pastor Rev. E. J. Pitts we wish to bear witness to his earnestness and zeal for the salvation of souls and to the faithfulness with which he has preached Christ and him crucified.*<sup>42</sup>

Edgar's resignation from our church was accepted on April 20, 1900. At the same meeting, our church,

*voted to sign a petition praying the Congress of the U.S. to abolish the sale of liquors in the Canteen of the National army.*<sup>43</sup>

After leaving our community, Edgar served a church in Somerville, Massachusetts, from 1900–1903. Then he served more churches in Maine. In 1917, at age 63, Edgar died at Lisbon Falls, Maine.

## ENDNOTES

1. *Congregational Quarterly*, October 1859, Vol. I, No. IV, 418.
2. *Yarmouth Register*, Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts, Friday, June 4, 1858, Vol. XXII, No. 27.
3. *Yarmouth Register*, Friday, September 16, 1859., Vol. XXIII, No. 42.

4. *FCC3*, Baptisms 1859, 56.
5. *Yarmouth Register*, Massachusetts, Friday, June 3, 1859, Vol. XXIII, No. 27.
6. *Barnstable Patriot*, Tuesday, September 13, 1859, Vol. XXX, No. 12.
7. *Congregational Quarterly*, July 1861, Vol. III, No. III, 306–307. See also Rev. Dr. Douglas K. Showalter, *Chapters on the 1806 Haystack Prayer Meeting and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (published by the author, 2006).
8. *FCC3*, December 30. 1864, Annual Meeting.
9. *Debates and Proceedings of the National Council of Congregational Churches, Held at Boston, Mass., June 14–24, 1865*, from the phonographic report by J. M. W. Yerrington and Henry M. Parkhurst (Boston: American Congregational Association, 1866), 22, 508.
10. *Debates and Proceedings*, xiv.
11. Gaius Glenn Atkins and Frederick L. Fagley, *History of American Congregationalism* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1942), 400.
12. *Yarmouth Register*, Friday, July 7, 1865, Vol. XXIX, No. 31.
13. Rev. Charles H. Washburn, “Historical Address Covering the 200 Years History of the First Congregational Church in Falmouth, Mass.,” *Two Hundredth Anniversary, 1708–1908, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts, October 11, 12, and 13, 1908* (1908), 47.
14. *FCC3*, November 17, 1870 Ecclesiastical Council meeting.
15. *Congregational Year-Book*, 1883. 24–25.
16. *Congregational Year-Book*, 1903. 20; *Falmouth Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, February 15, 1902.
17. Washburn, 50.
18. *FCC3*, July 31, 1874 meeting.
19. Washburn, 48. *FCS6*, fiscal year 1877–78. The society began paying a tax on the parsonage. The tax paid that year was \$18.80.
20. *FCC3*, October 31, 1879 meeting. At that time this was a trend among Massachusetts Congregational churches, and likely among other American churches. In 1876 and 1878, the General Association of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts, to which our church belonged, recommended that unfermented grape juice be substituted for wine at the Communion table. Apparently, our church chose to follow those recommendations.

21. Hannah S. B. Dykes, *History of Richard Bourne and Some of His Descendants* (Cleveland, Ohio: Privately Printed by Benjamin F. Bourne), 50; Letter from Edward B. Bourne, May 16, 2001. FCCS6, fiscal year 1884–5, Balance on Hand from Last Account. This appears to be the first time the yearly interest from the W. N. Bourne Fund appears in the records of the society’s treasurer’s records.
22. FCC3, March 4, 1887 meeting.
23. Washburn, 49. Our church’s Christian Endeavor Society was organized on August 17, 1887.
24. *An Act of the General Court of Massachusetts*, 1887, Section 1, Chapter 419. The act mandated that “Religious Societies shall not assess taxes on the polls or estates of their members, provided that pews may be assessed as heretofore.”
25. The wider society was also changing in various ways. For example, the Massachusetts Legislature in 1879 made it legal for Massachusetts women to vote for school committee members in their communities. See Primary Research, *Selected Records Related to Women’s Suffrage in MA*, <http://www.primaryresearch.org/suffrage/>
26. FCC3, May 25, 1888 meeting.
27. For more information on that important transition and Rev. Craig’s role in it, see Chapter 23 – “We Became a Free Church: Pews and Pledging” in this book.
28. Kevin F. Smith, *The History of Falmouth Heights Through the Years* (1982), 17.
29. “Commits Suicide By Drowning, Wheelock T. Craig Ends His Life in ‘Siders Pond,” *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, May 17, 1919, Vol. XXV, No. 7.
30. Samuel B. Capen owned a summer home on Falmouth’s Clinton Avenue, as well as a pew in our Falmouth church. He was a noted businessman and Congregationalist in Jamaica Plain, Boston. He led the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (ABCFM) during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Dr. George Boynton was a noted Congregational minister and author of the 1903 book *The Congregational Way: A Handbook of Congregational Principles and Practices*.
31. C. L. R. “A Tribute,” *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, May 31, 1919, Vol. XXV, No. 9.
32. *Yearbook of the Congregational and Christian Churches*, 1931. 63–64.
33. Rev. Charles Washburn, *Selections from Paper Read By Rev. C. H. Washburn At His Installation, October 15, 1890*.
34. For more information, see Chapter 21 – “Antoinette Palmer Jones: The Goodness and Power of One Christian” in this book.

35. Smith, 26.

36. E. D. McCafferty, *Falmouth By the Sea: The Naples of America* (The Board of Trade and Industry, 1896) and *Residential Falmouth Homes New and Old* (Falmouth-By-the Sea: The Board of Trade and Industry, 1897).

37. The reference is to Katharine Lee Bates's poem entitled "The Falmouth Bell." In addition to honoring our church's Paul Revere Bell, that poem also reflects some of Falmouth's nautical heritage, of which Rev. Washburn was so aware.

38. "Death of Rev. C. H. Washburn Recalls His Great Influence," *Falmouth Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Thursday, November 19, 1931. Vol. XXXVII, No. 35. As this article also noted the following:

*On August 7, 1907, nearly ten years after he had concluded his pastorate here, Mr. Washburn came back for the fruition of a project which originated with him, the Mariners' Memorial on Locust street, for which he prepared a list of Falmouth sea captains contained in a bronze box within the large boulder. Presentation of the monument to the town was made by Mr. Washburn at exercises which included a pageant at Woods Hole in honor of the Gosnold ter-centenary . . .*

*The next year, October 11-12-13, 1908, Mr. Washburn was again required in Falmouth as a leading spirit in the observance of the Two Hundredth anniversary of the setting apart of the First Congregational Church. At that time Mr. Washburn delivered a splendid Historical Address on the old church . . .*

39. *Congregational Year-Book, 1917*. 482; "Rev. Edgar T. Pitts, Formerly Pastor of First Congregational Church, Dies at Lisbon Falls, Me.," *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, April 7, 1917.

40. Washburn, *Historical Address*, 52.

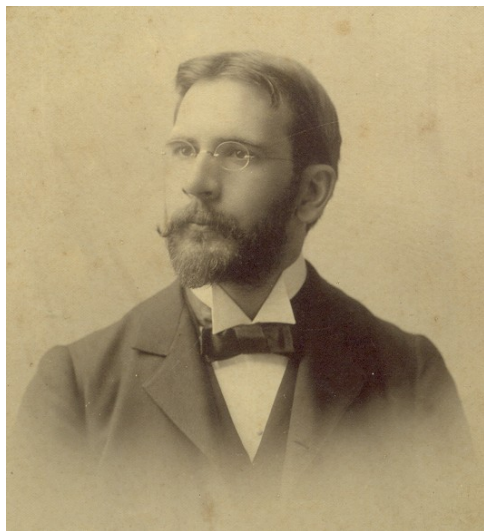
41. *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, September 20, 1899, Vol. V, No. 26.

42. *FCC4*, April 20, 1900 special meeting, 101.

43. *FCC4*, April 20, 1900 special meeting, 101. The local Women's Christian Temperance Union had a petition on the same subject. Both were filed in Congress by a local Congressman. *The Enterprise*, Vol. VI, No. 8, Falmouth, Mass., Saturday, May 26, 1900.

## Chapter 6 – Our Church’s Clergy: 1900–1959

### Rev. John H. Quint, 1900–1906



Rev. John Quint

John Hastings Quint<sup>1</sup> was born in 1868 in New Bedford, Massachusetts. His father, Rev. Dr. Alonzo H. Quint, was then serving the city’s North Congregational Church. John’s father was a noted Congregational minister who played a key role in formulating the famous Burial Hill Platform, adopted by Congregationalist delegates at Burial Hill in Plymouth, Massachusetts, shortly after the Civil War in 1865.<sup>2</sup> Congregationalists often looked to Alonzo as an authority on Congregational polity, until his death in 1896.<sup>3</sup>

Alonzo’s son, John, graduated from Bangor Theological Seminary in 1898. He was ordained that year to serve the Congregational church in Rochester, Massachusetts. He graduated from Bowdoin College in 1899. In 1900, he began to serve our Falmouth church.

About a month after John began his ministry in Falmouth, our church was given a set of individual Communion cups. That likely was done with the recognition that since wine was no longer served at our Communion services (since 1879) and scientists were now increasingly discovering germs that caused diseases, such individual cups would prevent the spread of illness in our congregation.<sup>4</sup>



Gift of individual Communion cups

John resigned from our church in 1906. At that time, the First Congregational Society passed this resolution which affirmed his,

*ability as a preacher, strong and fearless, to the exceptional beauty of the pastoral relation that he has established through the force of his personality and his manly<sup>5</sup> exposition of Christian citizenship in the life of the community.<sup>6</sup>*

After John’s resignation, the local newspaper said:

*The community will also feel the loss of one who has, during his sojourn with us, taken a deep interest in the welfare of the town and has been a strong advocate of good government.<sup>7</sup>*

In 1908, Rev. Charles Washburn described John as “a strong preacher, liberal in his theology, social as a pastor, his ministry in Falmouth is recorded as successful.”<sup>8</sup> Apparently, John was quite sensitive and open to the substantial shifts in theology that were then taking place in American Congregationalism, given the emergence of such new approaches to understanding as Darwin’s Theory of Evolution and Higher Biblical Criticism. John wrote an address for the 200th anniversary celebration of our church entitled “Present Conditions and Outlook for the Future,” which spoke about those theological shifts in his time. In part, John said:

*In every line of human thought and activity, the present is a period of wonderful movement, growth, expanding power, unfolding life; the transformation of old ideas, the reception of new truths. Science, philosophy, theology, have all broken over the old bounds and are sweeping along on the swelling current of a new world spirit . . . it is not the stationary, but the progressive theology that characterizes the epoch. It is the development, growth, change, progress, evolution—whatever you may call it—that will give to this period its ultimate historical significance.*

*Too wide-spread and genuine is the realization of the change that has come over Christian doctrine, for it to be discounted as mere froth on the crest of the waves. Development! growth! change! Everywhere we find it! We are riding on the bosom of a great flux of thought; anchors slip, soundings fail, onward we are borne to the enchanted sea of eternity. Yet I find the present religious unrest prophetic of a positive movement in which Christian theology shall grow into a new statement of faith, and be again enthroned in the hearts and minds of men.*<sup>9</sup>

John left our church to serve the Congregational church in Rockland, Maine. Then he served the Congregational church in Brunswick, Maine, from 1909 until 1913. He then went on to serve the First Congregational Church in Chelsea, Massachusetts, where he remained until his retirement in 1942.

John died in 1950 in Beverly, Massachusetts at the age of 81. At the time of his death, John was said to be the “last surviving founding member of the Falmouth Historical Society.”<sup>10</sup>

It appears that John’s ministry in our church marked a turning point. Along with many other Congregational churches in this period, our church was now moving into a more liberal theological understanding of God, our faith, and the Holy Bible, which is the path our church continues to walk on today in these early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Rev. Frank W. Hazen, 1906–1912**

Frank William Hazen<sup>11</sup> was born in Jericho, Vermont, in 1869, where his father, Rev. Austin Hazen, was serving a Congregational church. Frank came from a strong ministerial family. Frank’s paternal grandfather, also named Austin Hazen, four of his grandfather’s sons, including Frank’s father, and three of Frank’s brothers, were all ministers.<sup>12</sup>





Rev. Frank Hazen

Frank graduated from the University of Vermont in 1890 and Hartford Theological Seminary in 1897. He was ordained in 1897 in Pittsfield, Vermont, to serve the Pittsfield and Gaysville churches, where he remained until 1902. He then served in Middletown Springs, Vermont, from 1902–04 and was Assistant Pastor at the First Church in Meriden, Connecticut, from 1904–06.

Frank came to our Falmouth church in 1906 and served until 1912. At times during 1906, he also served as a supply preacher for the Congregational church in Waquoit.<sup>13</sup>

In 1908, during Frank's ministry, our church voted in favor of the proposed merger of Congregational, United Brethren, and Methodist Protestant denominations into one denomination on the national level. Presumably, years before, our church would not have been liberal enough theologically to have accepted such a merger. But that merger ultimately did not happen.<sup>14</sup> Later that same year, our church celebrated its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In 1909, Frank submitted his resignation to our church, but they voted 22 to 6, with 2 abstentions, not to receive it. They then resolved that if Frank would stay, they would "stand by and help him to the best of our ability."<sup>15</sup> Frank did stay.

In 1911 our church was first wired to use electricity.<sup>16</sup> That year our church was also painted completely white again, replacing brown paint which had previously been added to sections of its exterior, as shown on the right.<sup>17</sup>

Frank submitted his resignation again in 1912, this time after receiving a call from another church. The Falmouth church then gave this response:

*in accepting his resignation we would express our appreciation of his sterling Christian character and his fidelity to principle, that he is a man of culture and refinement whose daily life in a community must always be a strong influence for good, that he is an able preacher and faithful pastor, that our best wishes and prayers for his success will go with him to his new field of labor.*<sup>18</sup>



Our church with sections of brown paint added



As the local newspaper stated:

*Mr. Hazen has won the love and esteem of his parishioners as well as the respect and confidence of the entire community. The people in his new field of labor will find him a devoted and efficient pastor.*<sup>19</sup>

After leaving our church, Frank Hazen returned to Vermont, where many of his relatives had served churches. Frank served churches in Johnson from 1912–1920, in Richmond from 1920–1927, and in Danville from 1928–1930. Frank died in Danville, Vermont in 1930. His body was buried in Craftsbury, Vermont. Following Frank's death, his obituary in a Vermont newspaper said of him:

*Those who knew him best tell of his wonderfully sunny, cheerful, gentle and kindly attitude at all times. And yet withal, underlying this happy exterior, was the undaunted spirit which was ever ready to undertake the most difficult and seemingly insurmountable task. And not only did he undertake it, but he always carried it through. His ideals were high and he lived up to them. Everyone who came to know him loved him not only for what he was himself but also for what he did for his fellow men.*<sup>20</sup>

That obituary also noted:

*The Boy Scout movement had always been very close to his heart and he enjoyed not only teaching the boys the various forms of the scout work, but most of all initiating them into an appreciation of the beauties of nature. Mr. Hazen had the love of nature in a more than ordinary degree; nothing delighted him more than with a friend or with his children to climb some hill or mountain and from its summit enjoy with them the panorama spread out at their feet. Early last July together with his son and daughter he climbed Mt. Washington and what a grief it must have been to him to realize that never more would he be able to look out upon such a scene, as he was told that his heart could no longer endure the exertion of climbing.*<sup>21</sup>

### **Rev. Frank H. Baker, 1914–1919**

Frank Herman Baker<sup>22</sup> was born in Weld, Maine, in 1869. He graduated from Boston University in 1893 and Bangor Theological Seminary in 1897. He was ordained at Bars Mills, Maine, in 1897, where he served the Bars Mills and Groveville churches until 1901. Frank then served in Greenville, Maine from 1901–1903; in Bridgton, Maine from 1903–10; in Ipswich, Massachusetts from 1910–14; and then in our Falmouth church from 1914–19.

Shortly before Frank came to Falmouth, our local paper made this report:

*Rev. F. H. Baker has created an unusual stir in religious circles by suddenly resigning as pastor of the First Congregational Church at Ipswich, with an assertion that the town is*



Rev. Frank Baker

*so much “overchurched” that good pastoral work is practically an impossibility.*

That paper went on to report an interview Frank had with the *Boston Herald*. In that interview, Frank noted his support for the complete federation of the Protestant churches. He asserted his concern that in Ipswich the Protestant population was declining and that the only prospect for growth any of the six Protestant churches of various denominations then in town had would be to draw new members from other Protestant churches. As Frank also indicated in that interview:

*I would like to see a Protestant cathedral church with the different denominations represented by ministers who would work together with a single purpose. Then we could give a real administration to the immigrant and to the poor. The church would then have the place and influence which it should have.*

*Competition in the Sunday schools is another serious defect in the present system. Little fellows do not like to go to a church where their playmates do not attend and the result is many of them go nowhere. Bringing them all to one school would tend toward a far more democratic and unified Sunday school . . . By an institution of this kind, a large amount of money now tied up in church property would be set free for work among the foreign born. The one church with one equipment would reduce all other expenses . . . The unified church would need to start with one ideal, the express purpose of putting more work into the betterment of the town.<sup>23</sup>*

At the beginning of Frank’s ministry in Falmouth, our church accepted by vote the following resolution, which it sent to the Secretary of the U.S. Navy. In that resolution, our church expressed,

*its heartiest approval of the recent action of the Sec. Of the Navy, Hon Josephus Daniels in abolishing the use, by officers, of liquor on naval ships and in navy yards, an order of important significance. We are interested not only on account of its influence on the officers of our U. S. Navy as a large body of men representing our Country as its defenders, but from the more personal interest that one member of our own church is a young officer in the Navy.<sup>24</sup>*

It was also during Frank’s ministry in Falmouth that our church voted to join and support the Cape Cod Federation of Churches, a forerunner of today’s Cape Cod Council of Churches.<sup>25</sup>

In 1913, the National Council of Congregationalists met in Kansas City, Missouri, and adopted Congregationalism's famous "Kansas City Statement of Faith," which, in a slightly altered form, is the Statement of Faith which appears in our Falmouth church's by-laws today. Miss Antoinette Palmer Jones of our church, a seamstress, the founder of Floating Christian Endeavor in Woods Hole in 1890, and a licensed Congregational preacher, was present at that historic Kansas City meeting.<sup>26</sup>

Frank resigned from our church in 1919, citing his desire to be closer to a big city like Boston and to give his daughter "as nearly complete an education as possible."<sup>27</sup> Within months of Frank's resignation, our church voted to federate with the Methodist Church of Falmouth. However, the Methodists rejected that offer. One possible reason for their rejection was our church's proposal that, in such a federation, our church's minister would be the lead pastor and their church's minister would be the assistant pastor.<sup>28</sup>

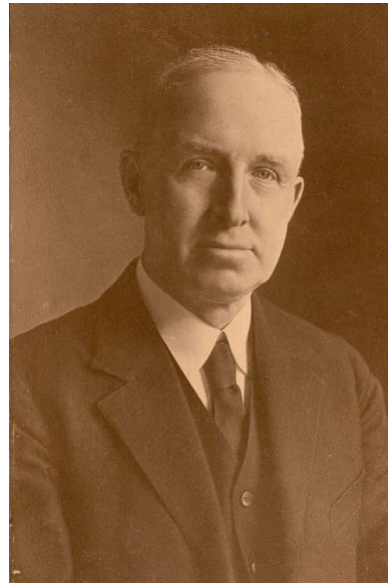
After leaving Falmouth, Frank served churches in Millis, Massachusetts, from 1919–1924 and in Ossipee & Center Ossipee, New Hampshire, from 1924–1936. He then supplied for a church in West Peabody, Massachusetts, from 1936–1940. In 1942, Frank died in Reading, Massachusetts at the age of 72.<sup>29</sup>

### **Rev. Irving A. Flint, 1920–1924**

Irving Adams Flint<sup>30</sup> was born in Braintree, Vermont, in 1868. He attended the University of Vermont and graduated from Bangor Theological Seminary in 1895. He was ordained in 1896 in Falmouth, Maine, and served the Congregational church there from 1895–1903. He served in Warren, Maine, from 1903–1907; the Free Church in Portland, Maine, from 1907–1910; in Hatfield, Massachusetts, from 1910–1918; and in Conway, New Hampshire, from 1918–1920. In 1920, he came to our Falmouth church and remained here until 1924.

It appears that during the years 1920 through 1922, our church was yoked with the North Falmouth Congregational Church, and Irving served both churches.<sup>31</sup>

During Irving's ministry, our church voted to allow him "to choose his own committees for various branches of the work of the church."<sup>32</sup> After receiving Irving's resignation and accepting it, the church expressed "appreciation of his sterling Christian character and his labor with us during the last four years."<sup>33</sup> In October 1924, the First Congregational Society voted to sell the church's old carriage sheds.<sup>34</sup>



Rev. Irving Flint

After leaving Falmouth, Irving served the Congregational church in Meredith, New

Hampshire, from 1924–1937, where he was named Pastor Emeritus upon his retirement. Irving died in Northwood, New Hampshire in 1942. His body was buried in Randolph, Vermont.<sup>35</sup>

### **Rev. Hubert A. Allenby, 1924–1927**



Rev. Hubert Allenby

Hubert Alfonso Allenby<sup>36</sup> was born in Barbadoes, British West Indies, in 1897. He graduated from Bates College in 1921 and Yale Divinity School in 1923. He was ordained as a Baptist minister in 1923 in New Haven, Connecticut. He served in Douglas and East Douglas, Massachusetts. In 1924, Hubert came to our Falmouth church and remained until 1927, the year when the Congregational Yearbook began listing him as a Congregational minister in full standing.

Hubert left our church to serve a church in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, until 1934. That fall, Hubert and members of his family traveled to Scotland, where Hubert studied at the University of Edinburgh. The following year, Hubert and his family returned to Falmouth, where he served the North Falmouth Congregational Church. In 1936, Hubert began to serve the Congregational church in Webster, Massachusetts.

During World War II, Hubert served as a military chaplain. He was stationed for a time in England and also at numerous U.S. military bases. Among his chaplaincy duties, Hubert ministered to military personnel who were hospitalized and also detainees at a German prisoner of war camp in New Mexico. He wrote an account of his latter work, which was published by Life Magazine.<sup>37</sup> Upon leaving the military, Hubert served the Winslow Congregational Church in Taunton, Massachusetts.

For many years, the Allenbys maintained a summer home, and Hubert ran a summer tutoring school in Falmouth. Hubert died in 1949 in a tragic boating accident, which also ended the lives of his wife, Mable, and seven other members and friends of his family. On making the trip back to Falmouth from Nantucket late one afternoon, the cabin cruiser they were passengers in sank after encountering a sudden squall. The only survivors of the eleven people on board were the boat's captain and the Allenby's oldest son, H. Alfred Allenby, who had recently graduated from Yale University.

That son, known to many as Al, later graduated from Yale Divinity School and was ordained in our Falmouth church on July 13, 1952, to ministry in our Congregational-Christian denomination.<sup>38</sup> Following his retirement from ministry and private school work, Al has for many years now been one of our church's Honorary Ministers, who assist our Senior Minister

particularly by conducting weddings of persons not affiliated with our church. Al has also long been the Editor of our church's newsletter, the *Messenger*.

### **Rev. Leonard S. Nightwine, 1928–1936**

Leonard Shell Nightwine<sup>39</sup> was born in Sweet Springs, Missouri, in 1885 or 1886. He graduated from the University of Central Missouri in 1911. He received an M.A. degree from Yale in 1913 and a B.D. degree from Yale in 1914. He was ordained in 1918, apparently as a Methodist minister.<sup>40</sup> During World War I, Leonard served as an Army chaplain at Fort Beauregarde, Louisiana.

In 1919, he transferred into the Congregational denomination. He served the First Church in Cortland, New York, from 1919–1921, then the Calvinistic Church in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, from 1921–1927. Leonard came to our Falmouth church in 1928.

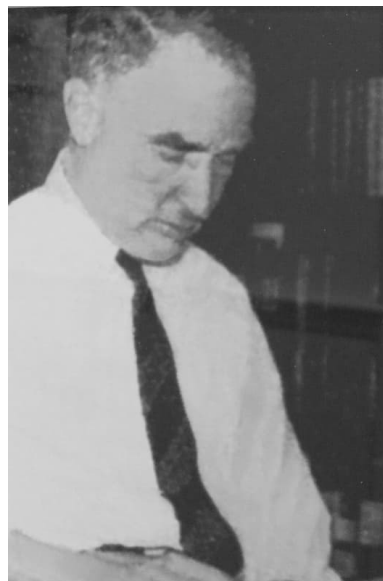
As an expression of his faith, Leonard wrote the following untitled hymn, which was sung at a Sunday evening Christian Endeavor service at our church.<sup>41</sup>

*'My Jesus, Lord, reveal to me  
Thy truth which ever makes men free  
Show me the way where wisdom leads  
Suit Thy Great Spirit to my needs*

*Through every realm of groping doubt  
Help me to 'beat my music out'  
That I may come, at last, to see  
How all things have their source in Thee.*

*Give me the faith to lose my life  
In loving service, void of strife.  
Make me to know that right will win  
Against all evil wrong and sin*

*When Baal Prophets flaunt their reign  
My frantic efforts seem in vain  
May Thy still voice whisper to me  
Vast multitudes bow not the knee.*



Rev. Leonard Nightwine  
shown whittling

*Teach me to trust the larger Good  
When surging evil, like a flood,  
Spreads its contagion far and wide  
And whelms me in its rolling tide.*

*Should stark injustice win the day  
And all around me turn away  
From Thy great cause, when all are gone  
May I, unyielding, stand alone. '*

In 1931, as the church struggled with its finances during the Great Depression and some individuals desired a new minister, Leonard's annual salary was cut from \$3,000 to \$2,000.<sup>42</sup> In the period from at least 1932–1934, the church's Women's Union came to the aid of our church by helping to pay some of its basic expenses, such as its lighting and fuel.<sup>43</sup>

In 1934, Leonard purchased a two-hundred-year-old home and moved it onto a lot at the head of Mill Road in Falmouth. He restored the house, which he called "Gray Shingles," to serve as his home. One of Leonard's talents was whittling, a skill he perfected through the years to the point where he won a national whittling championship.<sup>44</sup>

It was in January 1936, during Leonard's ministry, that our Falmouth church became incorporated under Commonwealth law. Our church and society merged as both joined the new church corporation. Members of that society were automatically eligible to join our church as Associate Members, if they weren't already members of our church. But Associate Members had, and continue to have to this day, some restrictions on the types of church issues they can vote on and the church leadership positions they can hold.

Not long after our church's incorporation, its Finance Committee recommended that Leonard's salary, already budgeted at \$2,000 for that year, be cut to about \$1,500. The Committee noted that about \$700 less in income was anticipated that year. The proposed budget revision, as well as Leonard's objections to it, were discussed at a meeting of the church, but then the revision was approved. Soon afterwards, Leonard resigned from his position in the church, asking that the resignation "take effect immediately or at the discretion of the Church Council."<sup>45</sup>

At the church's next meeting, on May 8, 1936, the church accepted Leonard's resignation. Still concerned about their financial difficulties, the church also decided then that they should investigate further the idea of entering a "Larger Parish Plan" with the other Congregational churches in Falmouth.<sup>46</sup>

On May 26, 1936, at the request of Leonard and our church, the Barnstable Association of the Congregational Churches held a Dismissal Council, as was common in that period, to review the actions taken. A May 29, 1936, newspaper article, which is contained in our church's

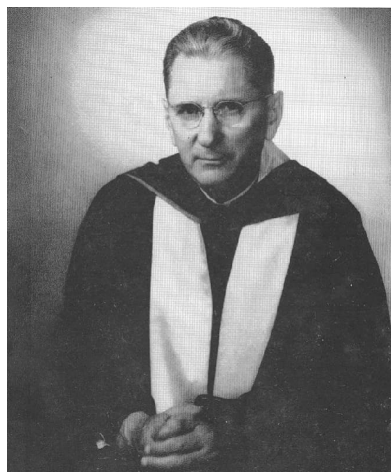
records, gave the following summary of that Council's findings:

*delegates and pastors of the Barnstable Association of Churches adopted resolutions expressing regret at the dissolution of Mr. Nightwine's relationship with the Falmouth church and urged the need of better cooperation between the pastor and the people to solve mutual problems. Mr. Nightwine recently resigned from the pastorate, after serving eight years here, because of a reduction in salary. His resignation was accepted by the church. The resolutions commend Mr. And Mrs. Nightwine; urge broadening of the basis of financial support in the churches so that the burden may be distributed and sudden and drastic reductions of a pastor's salary thereby avoided, and seeking of advice from Churches of the Fellowship, either in Council or informal conference, before final action is taken by either party.<sup>47</sup>*

This Dismissal Council said the following regarding Rev. Nightwine and his ministry:

*We have found in him a brother beloved whose marked endowments of mind and heart have made him a joy and inspiration to us all. The Church will long remember his straightforward sturdy leadership in the reorganization and development of the Church School and the Young People's Society, in securing permanent betterments to the property, and in winning sixty new members to the Church. Earnest and sincere as a preacher, faithful and wise as a pastor he has won the confidence of his Church and community . . . It is a matter of deep regret to the Council that this pastorate has come to such a seemingly abrupt termination.<sup>48</sup>*

Later in 1936, the church's committee searching for a new minister reported "that within the allowance of \$1,500 suggested by the Finance Committee, no suitable candidates had been secured."<sup>49</sup> After leaving our church, Leonard went on to serve a church in Marshall, Missouri. From 1940–1945 he served the North Community Church in Marshfield Hills, Massachusetts. Leonard died in Walla Walla, Washington, in 1953 after a four year illness.



Rev. Ralph Long

### **Rev. Ralph H. Long, 1936–1959**

Ralph H. Long<sup>50</sup> was born in Sac City, Iowa, one of eleven children who grew up on their family's farm. Ralph served in the military during World War I. He then graduated from Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa in 1921. In 1925, he received a Master of Sacred Theology degree from Boston University. In 1927, he went to Daytona, Florida where he was involved in the education of African Americans. Ralph came to our Falmouth church in 1936.

Ralph preached his third sermon in Falmouth in pain and was soon rushed to a hospital for an appendectomy. Ralph was



ordained in our church on May 19, 1937, by the Barnstable Association of Congregational Churches and Ministers.<sup>51</sup>

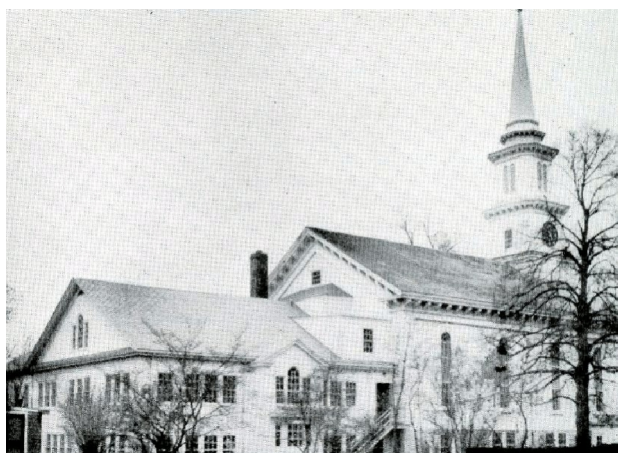
In January of 1938, Ralph's wife, Nellie, died from an illness she had before she came to Falmouth.<sup>52</sup> In 1939, Ralph married Margaret Gattis, a friend of Nellie's. In 1940, tragedy struck again as Ralph's oldest daughter, Margaret, drowned in Buzzard's Bay while sailing.

In 1943, during Ralph's ministry in Falmouth, the church's sanctuary was remodeled with the introduction of a "split chancel," containing a pulpit, a central altar-table, a dossal, a cross, and a lectern.<sup>53</sup> That sanctuary chancel configuration was then being adopted by numerous Congregational churches in Massachusetts, replacing the traditional central pulpit of Congregationalists. At that time, a cross was set on the altar-table. Later, that cross was replaced by the larger cross, which one now sees in front of the dossal and attached to the wall behind the altar-table.



Our modern split chancel

In 1955, our church voted to join and support the Cape Cod Council of Churches.<sup>54</sup>



Our 1958 addition

In 1958, our church celebrated the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its gathering in 1708. In that year, our church facility was expanded. The Christian Education Building addition was constructed on the back of our sanctuary building "to the glory of God and in memory of James M. Hills."<sup>55</sup>

Also in 1958, Ralph's wife Margaret compiled a review of our church's history entitled "The Treasured Heritage of the First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts."

In July of 1959, one of our church members, Col. William M. Tow, attended the Second General Synod of the United Church of Christ as a delegate. It met at Oberlin College, in Oberlin, Ohio. At that Synod meeting, the "United Church of Christ Statement of Faith" was accepted.<sup>56</sup>



The church's addition having been completed, Ralph entered retirement in 1959. The church honored him with the title "Minister Emeritus" by vote of the Church Council on June 22, 1965.<sup>57</sup> In retirement, Ralph and his wife Margaret lived in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where Ralph died in 1979.

## ENDNOTES

1. *Year Book of the Congregational Christian Churches*, 1950, 29; *Falmouth Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Friday, March 3, 1950, 6.

2. John von Rohr. *The Shaping of American Congregationalism, 1620–1957* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1992), 276–278. When a national meeting of Congregationalists in Boston in 1865 could not agree upon the wording of a declaration of faith that it had planned to present at Plymouth, Massachusetts, in honor of the Pilgrims, Rev. Alonzo H. Quint stepped into the debate. Quint developed a substitute version of that declaration, which, using his top hat as a table, he still worked on even as he and his fellow delegates were on a train heading to make their presentation in Plymouth. At Plymouth's "Burial Hill," the delegates accepted Quint's version [with some subsequent editing of its diction] as a statement of the delegates' common belief. That statement became known as "The Burial Hill Declaration" and is one of Congregationalism's most famous documents. See also Gaius Glenn Atkins and Frederick L. Fagley, *History of American Congregationalism* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1942), 203–205.

3. Oliver Ayer Roberts, *History of the Military Company of the Massachusetts Now Called The Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts, 1637– 888*, Vol. IV (1866–1888) (Boston: Alfred Mudge & Son, 1901), 381.

4. *FCC4*, September 7, 1900 meeting, 107. It is possible our church used individual Communion cups before this year, but I have not found a record indicating that.

*FCC4*, May 8, 1903. This year, our church was given additional individual Communion cups with trays. Our church still owns wooden trays with little Communion cups from this period; one of them is shown in the illustration. The stickers beneath those trays show that they were made by the Communion Sanitary Company.

5. Note the use of the term "manly" to describe Rev. John Quint. The choice of that word by the First Congregational Society of Falmouth may have reflected the influence of what has been called "muscular Christianity," a perspective that existed within American Protestantism in the period from about 1880 through 1920. Proponents of muscular Christianity stressed the importance of health, a strenuous life, and manliness to Christian discipleship. They rejected the feminization of Protestantism, which they saw in such things as the overuse of sentimental hymns and overly sweet depictions of Jesus. Proponents of muscular Christianity often emphasized physical fitness and sports and also sought to involve more men and boys in church life. The YMCA's development of basketball and volleyball in this time period is sometimes associated with muscular Christianity. See C. Putney, "Muscular Christianity" (2003), *The Encyclopedia of Informal*

Education. [http://www.infed.org/christianeducation/muscular\\_christianity.htm](http://www.infed.org/christianeducation/muscular_christianity.htm). The article first appeared in ABC-CLIO (2003); *Men and Masculinities: A Social, Cultural, and Historical Encyclopedia*.

6. *Falmouth Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Friday, March 3, 1950, 6, Vol. LV, No. 45. This was reported after Rev. Quint's death.

7. *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, January 6, 1906. Vol. XI, No. 40.

8. Rev. Charles H. Washburn. "Historical Address Covering the 200 Years History of the First Congregational Church in Falmouth, Mass." *Two Hundredth Anniversary, 1708–1908, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts, October 11, 12, and 13, 1908* (1908), 53.

9. Rev. John H. Quint. "Present Conditions and Outlook for the Future," *Two Hundredth Anniversary, 1708–1908, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts, October 11, 12, and 13, 1908* (1908), 81–82.

10. *Falmouth Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Friday, March 3, 1950, Vol. LV, No. 45, 6.

11. *Yearbook of the Congregational and Christian Churches, 1930*. 61; *Falmouth Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Thursday, December 11, 1930, Vol. XXVI, No. 38.

12. Jericho Congregational Church, Jericho, *Vermont. Historical Discourse Page*. [http://www.jccvt.org/Historical Discourse.htm](http://www.jccvt.org/Historical%20Discourse.htm)

13. *Congregational Year-Book, 1907*. 244; *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, November 17, 1906, Vol. XII, No. 33, indicates that as well as being the minister of the First Congregational Church, he is also a supply minister at the Waquoit Congregational Church and scheduled to preach there at 2 p.m. the next day.

14. *FCC4*, May 10, 1908 meeting, 164.

15. *FCC4*, December 10, 1909 meeting, 170.

16. *Falmouth Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, March 11, 1911, Vol. XVI, No. 49.

17. A note marked 1911 in the archives of *The Falmouth Enterprise* stated the following:

*The First Congregational church is receiving a coat of white paint. This color is most appropriate for a New England church of this description—the white meeting house and the Village Green. Lumbert and Bowman are doing the work.*

[Archive Envelope: First Congregational Church (General) 184 through 1959]

The 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary publication of the church from 1908 has a picture on its cover showing the church's exterior with two colors of paint. *Two Hundredth Anniversary, 1708–1908, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts, October 11, 12, and 13, 1908*.

18. FCC4, October 30, 1912 meeting, 181–182.
19. *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, November 2, 1912, Vol. XVIII, No. 30.
20. This clipped obituary for Rev. Hazen was likely from a Vermont newspaper. It is in the University of Vermont archives and marked VA W 1/14, 1931. It might have been from *The Caldonian* newspaper. I thank First Congregational Church Archivist Lois Parker for securing it.
21. Newspaper clipping obituary for Rev. Frank William Hazen, marked VA W 1/14 1931.
22. *Yearbook of the Congregational Christian Churches*, 1942, 40.
23. Quote from *The Boston Herald*, in “First Congregational Church Votes to Call Pastor,” in *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, December 27, 1913, Vol. XIX, No. 38.
24. FCC4, reply from Secretary of the U.S. Navy Josephus Daniels before March 9, 1914, 193.
25. FCC4, September 23, 1914 meeting, 196.
26. *The National Council of Congregational Churches of the United States, Addresses, Reports, Statements of Benevolent Societies, Constitution, Minutes, Roll of Delegates, Etc., of the Fifteenth Triennial Session, Kansas City, Mo., October 22–30, 1913* (Boston: Office of Secretary of the National Council, 1913), 414.
27. FCS4, April 9, 1919 meeting, 152.
28. FCC5, July 2, 1919 meeting, 82.
29. *Falmouth Enterprise*, July 3, 1942, Vol. XLVIII, No. 23, 12.
30. *Yearbook of the Congregational Christian Churches*, 1942, 44.
31. *The Congregational Year-Book, Statistics for 1920*, Vol. 44, 201–202, 225; *The Congregational Year-Book, Statistics for 1921*, Vol. 45, 202, 225; *The Congregational Year-Book, Statistics for 1922*, Vol. 46, 202, 225.
32. FCC5, December 28, 1921 meeting, 90.
33. FCC5, June 13, 1924 meeting, 97.
34. FCS4, October 3, 1924 meeting, 181. See also the *Falmouth Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, August 19, 1955, and “Church’s Ancient Carriage Sheds Face Scrapping For New School Athletic Field, *Falmouth Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Friday, April 6, 1962. The carriage shed had eight stalls. It was purchased by Dr. and Mrs. Chute, who lived at 54 Main Street beside the church, and moved to the back of their property.  
Ruth Washburn Sterling, daughter of Rev. Charles Washburn, our church’s minister from

1890–1898, recalled those carriage sheds from her early years in Falmouth. As she wrote:

*Behind the church stretched a long row of horsesheds, filled every Sunday with horses hitched to every sort of vehicle from carryalls, gigs and buggies to democrats, barouches, and even farm wagons. When the windows were open on a summer's day it was quite usual to hear the stamping of restless horses as they chafed at the bit, shook themselves to shake off the flies or occasionally neighed.*

Ruth Washburn Sterling. *Memories of Old Falmouth . . . The Parsonage Children*, 8, from articles in the *Falmouth Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, beginning on Friday, July 8, 1955.

35. "University of Vermont Necrology and Alumni Weekly Submission Sheet," on file at the University of Vermont. I thank First Congregational Church Archivist Lois Parker for securing it.

36. *Yearbook of the Congregational Christian Churches*, 1949, 20. See also numerous articles in the *Falmouth Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Friday, September 16, 1949, Vol. XV, No. 21, including "Nine Lives of Usefulness and Promise Are Cut Short."

37. *Life Magazine*, January 10, 1944.

38. *FCC6*, July 13, 1952, ordination service, 234.

39. *Yearbook of the Congregational Christian Churches*, 1953, 29; "Rev. Mr. Nightwine Dies in West After Four Year Illness," *Falmouth Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Friday, May 1, 1953, Vol. LVIII, No. 52; "Guide to the Miscellaneous Personal Papers Collection" (Record Group No. 30), compiled by Martha Lund Smalley. Yale University Library, Divinity Library Special Collections, Revised 2005, <http://webtext.library.yale.edu:80/xml2html/divinity.030.con.html>

40. *Yearbook of the Congregational and Christian Churches*, 1931, 142.

41. Leonard Nightwine's hymn was published in the *Falmouth Enterprise*, date unknown. A copy of it was found in the "people files" of the *Falmouth Enterprise* archives.

42. *FCS4*, September 29, 1931 meeting, 255.

43. *FCS4*, January 18, 1933 meeting, 264–265, and January 24, 1934 meeting, 269.

44. "Whittling Clergyman Exhibits Carvings at Marshfield," *Boston Daily Globe*, Wednesday, July 31, 1940.

45. *FCC5*, April 21, 1936 special meeting and April 26, 1936 resignation letter of Rev. Leonard Nightwine, 140–141.

46. *FCC5*, May 8, 1936 special meeting, 144.

47. *FCC5*, May 29, 1936 newspaper article, "Special to the Standard Times," 147.

48. FCC5, minutes from May 26, 1936 meeting of The Committee on Resolutions of the Barnstable Association of Congregational Churches, convened at the First Congregational Church of Falmouth, 147.

49. FCC5, informal meeting of church members in the vestry, September 25, 1936, 151.

50. "Rev. Ralph H. Long, 85, Ministered Here 22 Years," *Falmouth Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Tuesday, December 18, 1979, Vol. 86, No. 67.

51. FCC5, May 19, 1937 meeting, 166; "Congregational and Christian Ordinations, 1937," *Yearbook of the Congregational and Christian Churches, 1937*. 265.

52. "Pastor's Wife Dies At Home," *Falmouth Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, January 28, 1938.

53. As Margaret G. Long indicated in her book, *The Treasured Heritage of The First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts*, 1958, 22:

*About half of the total cost of \$3,182.00 for this project was paid by the Church and Parish members, the other half being paid by outside friends, mostly by Mr. And Mrs. James M. Hills, of Brooklyn, N.Y., and Menahaunt. A little later Mrs. Hills gave the chandelier and matching wall lights.*

54. FCC6, November 20, 1955 special meeting, 251.

55. "The Dedication Service, Christian Education Building of The First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts, " June 29, 1958. As Margaret G. Long indicated in her book, *The Treasured Heritage*, 1958, 23:

*the total cost of this addition was around \$130,000.00. This expense, except for a gift of \$30,000.00 by Mrs. James My. Hills, of Brooklyn, and Menauhant, who will name the new Unit, is being paid for by the members of this Church and this Parish, at much sacrifice to some of them, though it has all been done gladly and willingly.*

This project was completed with the help of an organization with specialists in fund-raising.

56. *The Second General Synod of the United Church of Christ*, Finney Chapel, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, July 5-9, 1959, 186.

57. "Remarks of the Moderator, Colonel William M. Tow, in presenting the certificate to the Reverend Ralph H. Long designating him MINISTER EMERITUS of the First Congregational Church, Falmouth, MA," August 1, 1965, [loose typescript sheets between 226, 227], FCC7.

## Chapter 7 – Our Church’s Clergy: 1960–2011

### Rev. Alexander L. Chandler, 1960–1967



Rev. Alexander Chandler

Alexander Luscombe Chandler<sup>1</sup> was born in Saugus, Massachusetts, in 1907. He was a son of Rev. Henry J. Chandler, a native of England who immigrated to America. Alexander graduated from the Boston University School of Religious Education in 1930 and Andover Newton Theological School in 1934. Both Alexander and his father were ordained in 1933. Alexander was ordained in Warner, New Hampshire, to serve the church there, where he remained until 1943. Alexander then served the Congregational church of Hackensack, New Jersey, until about 1959. In January 1960, he began serving our Falmouth church.

The first year Alexander was in Falmouth, our church accepted a gift of \$25,000 from a foundation for the purpose of restoring and renovating our church sanctuary. Using that and some additional funding, the renovation included, among other things, the removal of the tin ceiling and the installation of the plaster ceiling with cove and molding, some new plaster walls, and oak floor boards in the nave.<sup>2</sup> Our sanctuary was re-dedicated in January 1961.

In 1961, our church voted unanimously to join the newly formed United Church of Christ denomination, which was the legal heir of the former Congregational-Christian denomination of which our church had long been a member.<sup>3</sup>

Also in 1961, Katharine Lee Bates Road was extended, which took up “a large portion of the parsonage grounds” at 143 Palmer Avenue.<sup>4</sup>

In 1962, the Chute house beside the church at 54 Main Street was purchased and began to be used for church functions.<sup>5</sup> That house with its classic widow’s walk was built in 1814 by Captain William Bodfish. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century that house was featured on a postcard as a typical old Cape Cod house.



Our church’s Manse

In 1964, our church adopted a resolution which declared that membership in our church,

*is open to all persons who accept the obligations of membership in the Church of Jesus Christ, without any restriction as to race, class or ethnic background.*<sup>6</sup>

Alexander was a co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) of Cape Cod.<sup>7</sup>

In 1967, Ralph helped develop “The Lighthouse” summer coffee house for young adults, which was supported by 13 churches in our community, including our own church.<sup>8</sup> Also, Alexander and others in our church had long been involved in the Barnstable Association’s development of the United Church Apartments on Locust Street. In 1967, that project was nearing completion.<sup>9</sup>

Alexander left our church in December of 1967 and became the first full time director of the Cape Cod Council of Churches. Alexander died in North Conway, New Hampshire, in 1988. His body is buried in the Sandwich Town Cemetery in Forestdale, Massachusetts.

### **Rev. Dr. Stanley F. Johnson, 1968–1986**

Stanley Fritz Johnson<sup>10</sup> was born in Woburn, Massachusetts, in 1924. During World War II he served in the U.S. Army medical corps in Europe. In 1957, he received his Bachelor’s degree from Bowdoin College and graduated from Bangor Theological Seminary. “Stan,” as he was widely known, was ordained in 1957 in Wiscasset, Maine, to serve the Congregational church there. He remained there until 1962. He served the First Congregational Church in Lee, Massachusetts, from 1962 to 1968.

In 1968, Stan came to serve our Falmouth church. He remained here until he retired in 1986. In 1968, the church finally completed the sale of its parsonage on Palmer Avenue.<sup>11</sup> That same year, our church voted unanimously to turn the 1814 Chute house it had purchased in 1962 into the church’s parsonage for the church’s minister and family, which it continues to be today. The church then undertook the restoration of that house to serve that purpose.<sup>12</sup>



Rev. Dr. Stanley Johnson

Upon Stan’s request in 1968, two leaders of the Women’s Union organized an all-church fair—the first fair in our church “in a number of years.” That event was called the “Holiday Fair” and was held on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. That idea was so well received and so helpful to the church financially that such a fair has been held in our church every year since then. However, at present, that fair is held after Thanksgiving and is called the “Christmas Fair.”<sup>13</sup>

In his early years of ministry in Falmouth, Stan served as Director of the Falmouth Ecumenical Program for Youth. That organization sponsored the successful college-age summer coffee house known as “The Lighthouse,” which Stan’s predecessor helped initiate. Some summers that coffee house was held in the vestry of our church.



At our church's January 20, 1974 worship service, our church's \$85,000 mortgage on the Chute house, now often called the "Manse," was burned ceremoniously.<sup>14</sup>



Our Austin pipe organ

In 1975, following significant fund-raising efforts, the church purchased and installed the fine Austin pipe organ we presently have in the balcony.<sup>15</sup>

In 1976, after being debated at church meetings, the church finally voted to buy the McMurtre property behind the church. Stan's vision for the church's future and his ability to negotiate a lower asking price from the owners helped make that positive vote possible. The property consisted of 23,280 square feet.<sup>16</sup> If our church had not purchased that property, we could not have built our current septic system or Faxon Christian Education Center addition, both of which are now located on that land.

In 1979, Stan received a Doctor of Divinity degree from Piedmont College in Georgia. In 1980, the church expanded its staff by adding a full-time administrator and a part-time religious educator—positions which today bear the titles "Office Administrator" and "Director of Christian Education."<sup>17</sup> In 1980, the Diaconate Board noted that women were now frequently involved in serving as ushers at our worship services.<sup>18</sup>

In 1981, our church voted to sponsor a refugee family with help from the Massachusetts Council of Churches. Three members of the AuDuong family from Cambodia were welcomed to our church and community.<sup>19</sup> In 1982, our church voted to sponsor the remaining seven members of that family. That family now lives in California and has made a very successful transition to life in America.



The Auduongs celebrating the graduation of one of their family members in 2003

Stan was a trustee of Bangor Theological Seminary and received its Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1980. While in Falmouth, Stan served as Moderator of the Barnstable Association of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ.

After retiring from full-time parish ministry and leaving Falmouth, Stan served the Days Ferry Congregational Church in Woolwich, Maine, from 1987 to 2004. Stan died on Saturday, March 13, 2004, at his home in Alna, Maine.



### Rev. Dr. Douglas K. Showalter, 1987–2011



Rev. Dr. Douglas Showalter

Douglas Keith Showalter was born in 1948 in New London, Connecticut. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Bowdoin College in 1970. In 1973, he graduated from Yale Divinity School and was ordained in his home church in New London. From 1973 to 1976, he served the Benson-Orwell Parish in Vermont, which consisted of two Congregational churches in adjacent towns that were then yoked together. From 1976 to 1987, he served The First Church in Belfast, Maine.

In 1987, he came to Falmouth. In 1997, “Doug,” as he is commonly known, earned his Doctor of Ministry degree in the field of preaching from Chicago Theological Seminary.

In 1989, during Doug’s ministry, the Falmouth church began sponsoring a special ministry called “New Beginnings,” which held weekly meetings and was a valuable support and fellowship group for single adults, especially single-again adults. That ministry continued for sixteen years, until 2005.

In 1992, the Constance and Raymond Faxon Christian Education Center addition was dedicated. That project was initiated by an initial grant of almost \$250,000 from parishioner Raymond Faxon. After a three-year capital fund drive developed with the help of a United Church of Christ fund-raising specialist, the nearly \$800,000 addition was funded almost equally by Ray and his wife, Connie Faxon, and by members and friends of our congregation. It was built without a mortgage.<sup>20</sup>



Our 1990 capital campaign  
for our new addition

On August 19, 1991, when the addition was in a state of raw construction and no windows were in it, Hurricane Bob blew through Falmouth. That hurricane caused the addition’s roof and upper-story walls to fall down, setting the project back five weeks.<sup>21</sup> Fortunately, our church’s insurance policy, through our United Church of Christ denomination, served us very well in that emergency situation.

At present, if one looks closely, one can still see depressions in the Fellowship Hall floor where beams from that roof fell. Following the hurricane, our Fellowship Hall was redesigned to withstand 110 mile per hour winds, an upgrade from the 90 mile per hour code requirement then.



Destruction by Hurricane Bob, *The Boston Herald*, August 28, 1991

*Staff photo by Ted Fitzgerald, Courtesy of The Boston Herald*

Our parishioner, Connie Faxon, died in 1994. Our church was very grateful to receive a total of about 2.4 million dollars from her will, plus enough funds to secure an elevator for our new Faxon addition and a new Steinway grand piano for our sanctuary.

From 1993 to 2000, Doug and his wife Chris led parishioners on pilgrimages to Israel (twice), Egypt, Greece, Patmos, Ephesus, Jordan, Petra, and the 2000 Oberammergau Passion Play in Austria. In 1997, Doug earned his Doctor of Ministry degree in the area of preaching from Chicago Theological Seminary.

In 2001, our church called its first Associate Minister in recent times, the Rev. Nanette E. Geertz, whose untimely death in 2005 affected the church greatly.



Gallery of our clergy

In 2004, our Diaconate reaffirmed the policy of our church adopted at its Annual meeting on January 16, 1964, namely, that membership in the church “is open to all persons who accept the obligations of membership in the Church of Jesus Christ, without any restriction as to race, class or ethnic background.” As a further clarification of that statement, the Diaconate also stated its belief “that membership and full participation in our church presently is, and always should be, open to all persons without any restriction as to sexual orientation.”<sup>22</sup>

In 2008, our church celebrated its 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary. As part of that celebration, our sanctuary was completely refreshed, and our church's kitchen was brought up to code. Also, a time line of our church's long history and a picture gallery of our church's clergy were created.

During that anniversary celebration, Doug and some church members traveled to Montpelier, Vermont's Bethany United Church of Christ Church, to join them in celebrating their 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. There, in worship, they participated in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper using the still beautiful Communion ware flagon and cups which our Falmouth church gave to that Bethany church in 1808. That year, our church was celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the Bethany church was gathered.

On the culminating day of our church's 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in 2008, members of that Vermont church reciprocated. They joined our church in worship, bringing that Communion ware to our service. Then, to our surprise, they made a gift of two of those cups to our church as a symbol of the Christian good will and fellowship that have long existed between our two sister churches.



Some of the Communion ware our church gave the Montpelier church in 1808

Doug was the initiating founder and first president of Upper Cape Chaplaincy, an interfaith hospital and nursing home chaplaincy service that was begun in 1998. He brought the first computer into our church and developed our church's first website. With the congregation's approval, he developed the designation of Honorary Minister for retired ministers in the congregation whose ministerial help he was glad to receive, for example, by their officiating at the weddings of non-members and providing pulpit supply when needed. Doug also developed an innovative program in which lay parishioners were trained and commissioned by the church to officiate at services of Holy Communion for parishioners they visited who were at home or in care facilities and unable to attend church services due to health reasons.

In 2006, he led an historical workshop in Williamstown, Massachusetts, at the Bicentennial Celebration of the 1806 Haystack Prayer Meeting. That was one of numerous aspects of Congregational history upon which he has written and led workshops.

In 2007, Doug received a commendation from the town of Falmouth's Human Services Committee for his web site on forgiveness and his pastoral leadership of our Falmouth church's support of area service programs. Doug also initiated in our church a yearly Evolution Sunday in which the belief in the compatibility of our Christian faith and science's Theory of Evolution is affirmed.

Doug left our church in February of 2011 and then served as Interim Minister of The



Church of the Pilgrimage in Plymouth, Massachusetts. He and his wife, Chris, then retired in 2012 in Plymouth.

### **Rev. Nanette E. Geertz, 2000–2005**

Nanette Elizabeth Geertz<sup>23</sup> was born on June 20, 1944, in East Derry, New Hampshire. She graduated from Pacific University in 1966 and Andover Newton Theological School in 1992. From 1985 to 2000, she served as the Director of Christian Education at the First Church of Christ in Sandwich, Massachusetts, where her husband, Rev. Dr. William Geertz, served.



Rev. Nanette Geertz

In 2000, she came to our Falmouth church to serve as our Associate Minister and was ordained in her Sandwich church on February 4, 2001. Nan was our church's first female minister. She was also our church's first installed Associate Minister in recent times.

A Cape newspaper made this report about Nan following her ordination and subsequent installation as Associate Minister of our church:

*It was after fighting through the grief of her daughter's death, a bout with breast cancer and a legion of self-doubts that [Nan] was finally able to don robe and stoles earlier this month and—at age 56 begin.*

*'It was right for me to hum along as a preacher's kid, pastor's wife and a director of Christian education. It was a good tune to hum. But now I feel as if I have some words to add to the symphony,' she said in her ordination essay . . . 'I'm doing things I never thought I could do,' she says. Someone 'said to me that Sarah in the Bible was 90 years old when she had a career change, so go for it. My advice is Why not?'*<sup>24</sup>

During her time in Falmouth, Nan developed numerous ministries, including a Health Cabinet, a women's Bible study, healing services, and an arts program through which artists of all kinds in our church were invited to display their creative works. She also expanded the Confirmation program significantly.

Nan was the first chairperson of the Commission for Educational Ministries of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ. In 1996, she received the Conference's "Educator of the Year" award.<sup>25</sup>

In 1995, Nan was diagnosed with breast cancer and subsequently had surgery, but then cancer reappeared during her ministry in Falmouth. Despite her long and spirited struggle to be

well, that illness eventually led to her death on February 26, 2005, in Sandwich. As her ministerial colleague Doug Showalter said at her funeral in Sandwich:

*One of the things I valued most about Nan, was her sensitivity and caring for other people. Nan often looked below the surface to try to understand and make a personal connection with the feelings of others. Nan's pastoral care was superb, as many of our parishioners have acknowledged . . . As you know, Nan was a 'wounded healer,' as many ministers are. Nan's own personal experiences with loss and her courageous struggle against illness gave her an extra depth of understanding and compassion which, in her hands, became a blessing to others . . . All in all, Nan was a gracious, gentle, loving, and caring human being, and a fine colleague.<sup>26</sup>*

Nan also had a poetic spirit and was a gifted liturgist. It seems fitting to conclude this chapter with the following Benediction which Nan wrote and presented to conclude her service of Ordination in the First Church of Christ in Sandwich:

*May our God who has known you since before you were born,  
May the Christ whose eyes have searched and known you,  
May the Holy Spirit that coaxes you and invites you into the singing of God's song;  
Keep, guard, and sustain you, now and forever. Amen.<sup>27</sup>*



Our modern sanctuary

## ENDNOTES

1. *United Church of Christ Year Book for the Year 1988*, 629; *Congregational Christian Churches Year Book, 1958*, 329; *Cape Cod Times*, Saturday, October 15, 1988, 9.
2. *FCC6*, August 8, 1960 special meeting, 291. It was unanimously voted to proceed with the sanctuary restoration project.
3. *FCC7*, January 19, 1961 meeting, 211.
4. *Annual Report for Year 1960*, Church Council of the First Congregational Church of Falmouth.
5. *FCC7*, February 1, 1962, adjourned annual meeting, 216–217. The purchase price was \$45,000.
6. *FCC7*, January 16, 1964 annual meeting, 220.
7. “Alexander Chandler, 80; first church council leader, co-founded Cape NAACP,” *Cape Cod Times*, Saturday, October 15, 1988, 9.
8. *FCC7*, October 26, 1967 meeting, 235.
9. *FCC7*, November 30, 1967 meeting, 236.
10. *United Church of Christ Year Book 2005*, 769; “The Pastor Heads North: I’m Opening New Doors,” *Falmouth Enterprise*, December [unknown day], 1986; “Parishioners Bid Retiring Minister Farewell With Humor, Affection,” *Falmouth Enterprise*, December 15, 1986; “The Rev. Stanley F. Johnson, 79, Former Minister at Falmouth Congregational Church,” *Falmouth Enterprise*, March 16, 2004.
11. *FCC7*, June 1, 1967 meeting and October 9, 1967 meeting, 233–235. The Palmer Avenue parsonage was sold for \$26,250, as noted at the October 26, 1967 meeting. However, a law suit contesting a town granted zoning variance related to that sale held the completion of that sale up until 1968. Board of Trustees Report, *Annual Report For Year Ending 1968*, January 23, 1969, 35.
12. At a special church meeting on July 22, 1968, it was voted to renovate and restore the Church house as “the church parsonage.” *FCC7*, July 22, 1968, 240. The family of Rev. Johnson took up residence in the parsonage in January 1969. *Annual Report For The Year 1969*, January 22, 1970, 29. At a church meeting on May 4, 1969, it was reported that restoration of the Chute house cost \$38,898.19 and that an additional \$3,916.43 was needed to meet payments due. *FCC8*, May 4, 1969, 237.
13. “Women’s Union Annual Report,” 26, and “Report on the ‘Holiday Fair,’ Saturday–November 23, 1968,” 29, *Annual Report, First Congregational Church, Falmouth*,

*Massachusetts*, January 23, 1969. And which booths at that 1968 “Holiday Fair” had the largest net earnings? It was reported that the top three income producers were: Food, \$224.45; Gift, \$167.13; and Decorations, \$155.55.

14. FCC8, January 20, 1974 meeting, 175.

15. FCC8, October 30, 1975, report given at the annual October meeting, 183. See also the following, in which The Organ Fund Committee indicated their overall expenses for the project were somewhat over \$56,000. Organ Fund Committee Report, *Annual Report for Year Ending 1975, First Congregational Church of Falmouth, MA of the UCC*, January 29, 1976, 18.

16. FCC8, October 28, 1976 meeting, 197. The price of the McMurtre land purchase was \$33,000 plus closing costs.

17. FCC8, October 23, 1980 meeting, 221.

18. Diaconate Board Report, *1979 Annual Report, The First Congregational Church, of the United Church of Christ, Falmouth, Massachusetts*, January 27, 1980, 11.

19. FCC8, March 22, 1981 special meeting, 225.

20. FCC10, September 17, 1989, 246. When the crucial vote came at a church meeting, 118 members voted in favor of moving forward with the project and 17 voted against it. That percent of about 87% in favor was deemed sufficient to proceed. However, from that point on, efforts were made to be sensitive to and not alienate the small percentage of members who had doubts about the project.

21. At the time of the addition’s destruction, its image was broadcast on TV news across America, but most people in Falmouth could not see it because they had no electric power for days after the hurricane.

In an August 1991 letter to concerned friends outside the area, Doug Showalter described the experience he and his wife Christine had with the hurricane:

*Chris and I live in the parsonage next door [to the church]. We just missed seeing the collapse [of the addition] by a minute or two. It happened at about 1:50 p.m.—relatively early in the storm. It’s hard to believe, but although we heard many trees fall, we did not hear the building collapse. Frankly, when the storm started, Chris and I were more concerned that the church’s steeple would fall—and end up in our library. We could see the uppermost part of the steeple moving under the force of the more than 100 m.p.h. winds. Fortunately, the steeple is still basically secure, [though it needs some shoring up]. Many large trees on our church property were blown down—all in the same direction. Because two of those trees were tangled in the back corner of the addition wreckage, we assume they initiated the collapse . . . With the collapse of the second floor walls, the hurricane winds apparently lifted the roof like an airplane wing, sliding it partially to the ground. A couple of large steel beams were twisted by the force of the roof dislocation, as the roof pulled completely away from the existent building. But*

*here's the amazing thing. The first level of the addition . . . survived almost entirely intact.*

22. "Statement Passed by the Diaconate of the First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts, of the United Church of Christ, November 3, 2004." That statement was subsequently ratified by our Church Council. That statement also said:

*We recognize that there are two unresolved issues concerning our church's relationship to homosexual persons, not addressed in the above statement, which will be studied further. These are the issues of whether or not our church will sponsor any kind of worship service to seek God's blessing on the union or marriage of same gender couples and whether or not our congregation would accept as one of its called ministers, a person who is homosexual. We recognize that our church's Ministers and Honorary Ministers have the authority to officiate, at their discretion, at legal marriage services in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which are not conducted on our church's property.*

In 2010, our deacons and Church Council resolved one of the issues above by affirming the following:

*future Ministerial Search Committees should consider all candidates and present the best candidate to the congregation for a vote in accordance with the existing by-laws.*

23. *United Church of Christ Yearbook*, 2006, 754; "The Rev. Nanette E. Geertz, 60: Minister; Christian education director; assistant librarian," *Cape Cod Times*, Wednesday, March 2, 2008; "Nanette E. Geertz," *The Falmouth Enterprise*, Friday, March 4, 2005, 2; "Reverend Nan Geertz Remembered: More Than 400 Attend Memorial Service At First Church," *The Falmouth Enterprise*, Friday, March 11, 2005.

24. Kathi Scrizzi Driscoll, "Pastor: Tragedy and Illness Sent Geertz in Unexpected Direction," *The Cape Cod Times*, Thursday, March 29, 2001. Nan and Bill Geertz's nineteen year old daughter Jennifer came home from college for Thanksgiving in 1990 and died quite unexpectedly from a bacterial infection.

Nan wrote a poem about Jennifer's death which was illustrated by fellow United Church of Christ minister Anne Ierardi and published: *Walking With Grief – A Healing Journey* (Yarmouthport, Massachusetts: Healthsigns Center, Inc., 2006). In a review of that book, Rev. Suzanne Hope Graham wrote:

*This poem is her search to make sense and give meaning not only to the life and loss of Jennifer, but to her own sadness. She looks for connections with the world around her and finds Jennifer's essence and her own consolation there: 'kitten, do you know where my jennifer is? no, but you may use my playfulness to remember her laughter?' and on another page, 'sunrise, have you seen my daughter? no, but today is a new day for loving her still.' She is able to put Jennifer in the continuum of creation, with all God's creatures, with those who have been, are now and are yet to come. That is what we want for those we have lost, too.*

*The generosity of Nanette Geertz is that she gently leads us there. Her world is filled with what is in ours: rain, stars, wind, a budding tree. She shows us that we can find our own*



*comfort through her words and not only understand her journey, but deepen the dimensions of our own. She reminds us to look around, make connections, and remember.*  
 Rev. Suzanne Hope Graham Reviews, "Walking With Grief—A Healing Journey,"  
<http://www.plainviews.org/AR/i/v4n10.html>

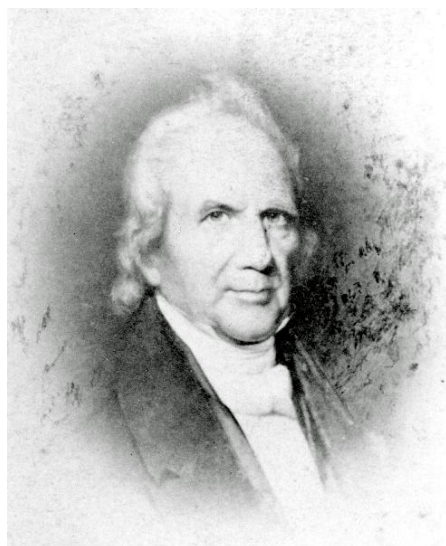
25. Conference News in Massachusetts, Section C, *United Church News (Massachusetts Edition)*, Vol. XXI, No. 2, March/April 2005, C2.

26. Rev. Dr. Douglas K. Showalter, "*In Remembrance of Rev. Nan Geertz*," Saturday, March 5, 2005.

27. Rev. Nanette E. Geertz, Ordination Service, February 4, 2001, First Church of Christ in Sandwich.

## Chapter 8 – Rev. Henry Lincoln and the 1812 Quissett Revival<sup>1</sup>

Through much of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the “Church of Christ in Falmouth,” as our church likely was then known, remained close to its New England Puritan roots. For example, a conversion experience of God’s saving grace continued to be a requirement for church membership. And only members could receive the Lord’s Supper and have their children baptized. Also, until the eve of the Revolutionary War, our congregation continued to sing Psalms a capella from New England’s first published book, the “Bay Psalm Book” of 1640. However, as the 18<sup>th</sup> century drew to a close, our church began to change.



Rev. Henry Lincoln  
*Courtesy of Falmouth Historical Society*

Harvard graduate Henry Lincoln of Hingham, Massachusetts, was ordained in 1790 to serve our church.<sup>2</sup> Months after his ordination, our church took the significant step of dropping its requirement that a relation of a saving grace experience was needed for membership.<sup>3</sup> To become a member, one now only needed to fulfill the other requirements of being a baptized Christian and agree to the church’s covenant, which still contained an affirmation of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>4</sup> Thus, joining our church became considerably easier.

In 1801, our church began using a new hymnal compiled by Boston Congregationalist Rev. Jeremy Belknap.<sup>5</sup> That hymnal was unusual because it sought to appeal to Congregationalists who now rejected the Trinity, as well as Congregationalists who continued to affirm that doctrine. Many Massachusetts Congregational churches in this period that used that hymnal later described themselves as Unitarian.<sup>6</sup> In fact, it’s been said that Belknap’s hymnal was “the principal Unitarian hymnal for nearly forty years.”<sup>7</sup>

As the 19<sup>th</sup> century began, our church was moving away from the Puritans’ traditional Calvinistic belief in the total depravity of humans, their complete dependence on God’s grace for salvation, and God’s pre-ordained election of only some people to eternal salvation. Instead, our church was beginning to entertain what was then called “Arminianism,” namely, belief in the free will of all humans; their ability to do good or evil; and their opportunity, with God’s help, to overcome their sin in order to attain salvation.

In this period, a number of Massachusetts Congregational churches, particularly in Boston and eastern Massachusetts, were moving in that same Arminian direction. Many of those churches eventually rejected the Trinity and considered themselves to be Unitarian.<sup>8</sup> Our church might well have done the same thing eventually, except that the religious movement in America known as the “Second Great Awakening” was beginning to make itself felt on Cape Cod and in Falmouth itself.

That Awakening affected many American communities from the 1790s through the 1820s. It was characterized by revival services and stressed the importance of personal piety, conversion experiences, and doing good works to benefit others without regard to the cost to one's self.

The period from 1808 to 1812 was a particularly difficult one in Falmouth and on the Cape. People were very anxious about the possibility of another war with Great Britain. Also, in response to British and French violations of the rights of the United States at sea, the U.S. in December of 1807 put an embargo on its own shipping, which lasted fifteen months. That embargo kept many Cape men at home instead of earning their livelihood on the sea. Writing in the mid-nineteenth century, Cape historian Frederick Freeman said that Falmouth's extensive Southern shipping trade was so disrupted by the effects of that embargo that "the commercial interests of the town perhaps never entirely recovered."<sup>9</sup> Unable to resolve their difficulties peacefully, the U.S. Congress finally declared war on Great Britain on June 18, 1812. That was the War of 1812; it continued to be fought until 1815.

In 1808, near the beginning of this difficult period, a Baptist minister named Barnabas Bates from Hyannis began holding revival meetings in Falmouth. Those meetings apparently emphasized the importance of experiencing "the new birth"—a conversion experience of God's saving grace.<sup>10</sup> It was said that prior to those meetings, Rev. Lincoln, our church's minister then, had never been exposed to such "experimental religion," as it was then called. It was also said that when Rev. Barnabas came to town, "Mr. Lincoln got scared—too much for him + went to Boston."<sup>11</sup>

In the following year, 1809, revival meetings were held in Sandwich and then spread to Falmouth and Barnstable.<sup>12</sup> Such meetings were responsible, at least in part, for our church receiving one hundred and fourteen new members that year.<sup>13</sup> That likely was far more new members than our church has ever received in any other year in its long history thus far!<sup>14</sup>

As it turned out, the Falmouth church soon excommunicated one of those new members—Samuel Madan Dewey—by unanimous vote. Church records indicate that shortly after Dewey joined our church, he left it to join a Baptist church. In addition to speaking disrespectfully of our church and our minister, Dewey essentially told our church members at a public meeting that if they had not had a personal conversion experience, they should humble themselves before him, revivalist Rev. Bates, and others outside our church.<sup>15</sup> At this time, some of our church members had had a conversion experience and others had not. Yet, apart from Dewey, our church members were apparently not willing to discredit our church or try to divide it because of that difference.<sup>16</sup>

In 1810, our church began using a new hymnal that contained translations of the Psalms by Isaac Watts, an English Independent. It's likely significant that our church chose that hymnal because hymnals with Watts' Psalms were commonly used by Trinitarian Congregational churches in New England in this period.<sup>17</sup>

In 1811 [or possibly 1810], Rev. James Davis, then a Congregational evangelist, and Rev. Barnabas Bates conducted revival services in Falmouth.<sup>18</sup> Some of those services were even held in our church, then located on the town's Village Green.<sup>19</sup> A fellow revivalist preacher later gave this account of those meetings:

*Rev. Mr. Lincoln, who was pastor of the Congregational church in Falmouth at this time, was an unconverted man . . . some members of Mr. L's church said to Mr. Lincoln, 'Why did you not tell us when you took us into your church, that we must be born again?''*

*There was another interesting fact connected with these meetings. There was a military training or muster in the place, and one of the companies, if not more, was so much concerned for their souls, that the members of it proposed to march into the meeting house, and ask Christians to pray for them, which they actually did do.*

*Mr. Lincoln professed to experience a change of heart soon after this, and also many others. Some became Baptists, and joined the Baptist church in Hyannis, others became Methodists, but the largest number connected themselves with the Congregational church in the place.*

*Another incident occurred at these meetings of which I was informed, and in which we can see strikingly illustrated the saying that, 'man purposes, but God disposes,' it was this:—The principle physician in the town, coming home from visiting some of his patients, found that his wife and daughter had gone to an evening meeting; and being very much opposed to the meetings, he declared that he would go and take them home. He entered the meeting house, and got only a short distance up the broad aisle, when to his surprise, his wife and daughter, with others, had just stepped out of the pews into the broad aisle, where inquirers were requested to come, who desired to be conversed with and prayed for.*

*It had such an effect upon the doctor's mind, that instead of taking his wife and daughter home with him, as he at first intended, he fell upon his knees, and desired the people of God to pray for him. Thus frequently, is 'the loftiness of man humbled, and the Lord alone exalted.'*<sup>20</sup>

Rev. Lincoln had a conversion experience himself in 1811.<sup>21</sup> In fact, he was one of six Congregational clergy serving churches on Cape Cod who had such an experience during this period.<sup>22</sup> If Arminianism was the new incoming tide among Congregationalists on the Cape, the Second Great Awakening was, to a significant extent, now causing that tide to turn, though not without causing some problems.

Rev. Jonathan Burr, the Congregational minister in Sandwich since 1787, was another one of those six clergy who were converted. Because of that experience, Burr changed both his theology and his preaching style. Those changes caused considerable disruption and bitterness in

his community. On July 28, 1811, the Sandwich parish finally forced Burr out of its church's pulpit, then ultimately dismissed him. He and the majority of his church members and congregation then left that church and eventually built their own Trinitarian Congregational church down the street.<sup>23</sup> A law suit brought by Rev. Burr against the Sandwich parish was even heard by the Supreme Judicial Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, though that court decided against Burr.<sup>24</sup>

In contrast, there is no sign that Rev. Lincoln's conversion created any such division and discord in our Falmouth church or community. It was later reported of those six Cape ministers that, with the exception of Burr, "the change in the minister was followed by a corresponding change in the people, so that a schism was avoided."<sup>25</sup> The Sandwich church, which Burr left, soon came to consider itself Unitarian.

On May 12, 1812, there was another revival—long known locally as the "Great Revival"<sup>26</sup>—which had such an impact on our church that in 1880, an account of it was carefully inscribed in the church's official records.<sup>27</sup> At that time, some participants in that revival were still alive. That 1812 revival took place in the home of Thomas and Susanna<sup>28</sup> Fish, who had joined the Falmouth church in 1804, when a conversion experience was not required for membership.<sup>29</sup> Later, it was said that when Rev. Lincoln originally urged the Fishes to join the church, Susanna replied, saying, "I am not good enough." To that, Rev. Lincoln answered, "If you are not good enough, who is?"<sup>30</sup>

The Fishes lived in a house overlooking Quissett Harbor, where Thomas was an agent for a shipbuilding firm. Though it has expanded since that time, that house still exists today and is known as Hurricane Hall.<sup>31</sup> It was said that after Susanna Fish joined our church, "there came to her a great desire for a deeper religious experience. For a long time she sought to receive it." In fact, Susanna was the "mother in Israel" who was referred to in the following 1880 account of the "Great Revival," which appears in our church's records.

*On the 12<sup>th</sup> of May 1812 occurred one of the most remarkable revivals of religion ever known in this region. A mother in Israel, shrewd and intelligent, who had been a member of the church for eight years, did not have a satisfactory evidence that she had experienced the change called the new birth, and for many months had the united head of this family as one pleaded the promise, 'Where two or three are touching one thing are agreed, it shall be done for them.'*

*A fresh unction from on high they asked, their duties to discharge. This morning, the 12<sup>th</sup> of May, broke with blessings on this house of prayer, and light broke in on her mind, and she was filled with joy and peace unspeakable. She immediately sought her children, and other members of the household, to tell them what God had done for her soul, and to bow the knee with them and for them in prayer. One female in the family who had long been anxious was led then to shout for joy in hope of pardoned sin.*

*The good tidings were carried to the neighbors, and a near neighbor, a praying sister, came in to rejoice with them that did rejoice. They soon retired to pray, and present their thank offerings for mercies received. The sister was called from her domestic duties to listen to their prayers when she too was overwhelmed with a sense of her condition, and led to cry out in bitterness of spirit, 'Lord save, or I perish.'*

*A vessel was building near by, and when the workmen were made acquainted with the dealings of God, a deep solemnity persuaded their minds. Fearfulness and trembling surprised sinners in Zion and they became simultaneously awakened and alarmed, and cried out in anguish, 'What must I do to be saved?'*

*The tidings of the Spirit's presence and power went forth, and gathered the children of God together in the neighborhood, and for a week religious services were carried on under that roof, in the progress of which there were daily conversions. All labor was suspended, and three meetings a day were held. Six of the family indulged the hope that they passed from death unto life, two workmen, the three sisters, and a woman living in the family. The November following fifteen persons were added to the church as the fruits of revival, four of whom are now living, the three sisters, and Mr. John Davis at Quissett.*

Each year on the anniversary date of that 1812 Quisset Revival, for 84 years or more, a special Twelfth of May service was held at that home or at another location, presumably nearby.<sup>32</sup> Falmouth church members, Quisset residents, and their relatives attended that annual service to worship God and commemorate that 1812 event.

As Rev. Charles Washburn, our Falmouth church's minister from 1890–1898, wrote in 1908:

*One of the most precious memories of my own pastorate over this church is that of going up to Quisset each year upon the 12<sup>th</sup> of May to help celebrate the wonderful blessing of God. We can never forget the singing as Thomas and Joseph Fish sang the old tunes of Mear and Northfield.<sup>33</sup>*



We speak not in the words that man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth 1 Cor. 2:13

Worship bulletin image  
during Rev. Washburn's ministry

These events, from 1808 to 1812, had a significant impact on our church. In the wake of those revival meetings and conversion experiences, and once the War of 1812 was concluded, our church adopted a new Confession of Faith in 1816.<sup>34</sup> From that point on, every person joining our church was expected to give assent to that Confession statement. That statement affirmed belief in the Trinity. It also stated that our church shouldn't receive a person into its fellowship, until our church was "satisfied, in a judgment of charity that he has been born again."

As a demonstration of tolerance, however, our church adopted that Confession with the understanding that present members of our church who could not fully assent to this new Confession would not have their relationship to our church disturbed.<sup>35</sup> This stipulation recognized that for the previous quarter century, the relation of a conversion experience had not been required of those joining our church. But now, in 1816, that had changed. A conversion experience was again required. Thus, our church largely returned to the theological understandings long embodied in its pre-1790 Puritan roots.

Today, our Falmouth church is basically mainline Protestant in orientation. It does not require a conversion experience or “new birth” for membership in the church. It does not restrict its sacraments of the Lord’s Supper and Baptism to only its own members. Also, it’s likely that most of our church’s parishioners today would question the Puritans’ denial of human free will and find their doctrine of God’s pre-ordained election of only some people to salvation, both unfair and quite foreign to their thinking.

The theology of today’s First Congregational Church of Falmouth has evolved with our church’s entry into the modern age. Nonetheless, the events of 1808–1812 continue to be very significant for our church for the following reasons. Those events returned our church to the mainstream of America’s Congregational churches, a position in which our church has remained ever since. Those events also led our church to continue espousing its historic Puritan belief in Trinitarianism.

Of the eleven Congregational churches in Boston in the early 1800s, ten of them became Unitarian.<sup>36</sup> In part due to the influence of the Second Great Awakening, twelve of the fifteen Congregational churches on Cape Cod in 1800, ultimately continued their walk in the Trinitarian Congregational Way.<sup>37</sup>

## ENDNOTES

1. Most of this chapter was previously published, without endnotes but with numerous other pictures, as “First Congregational Church and the 1812 Quissett Revival,” *Spritsail: A Journal of the History of Falmouth and Vicinity* (Woods Hole, MA: Woods Hole Historical Collection, 2009), Volume 23, Number 1, Winter 2009, 3–12.

2. FCC2, February 3, 1790, “*An Account of My Ordination*,” 5. Henry Lincoln’s home minister, Rev. Henry Ware, was a member of the ecclesiastical council that ordained Lincoln. It’s interesting to note that Ware later became a noted Unitarian Congregationalist and his controversial election to a professorship at Harvard in 1805 led Trinitarian Congregationalists to abandon that school. In 1807, Trinitarian Congregationalists founded Andover Theological Seminary for educating their own ministers. John von Rohr, *The Shaping of American Congregationalism, 1620–1957* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 1992), 251–254.

3. This requirement was dropped except for those “who have been guilty of any notorious or scandalous vices.” *FCC2*, 125.
4. *FCC2*, February 3, 1790, “*An Account of My Ordination*,” 5.
5. *FCC2*, April 19, 1801 meeting, 126.
6. Jeremy Belknap, *Sacred Poetry: Consisting of Psalms and Hymns, adapted to Christian Devotion, in publick and private*, 1795; Charles L. Atkins, “American Congregationalists And Their Hymnals,” *Bulletin of the American Congregational Association*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (January 1951), 6.
7. Jason Shelton, “Changing the Words: An Historical Introduction to Unitarian Universalist Hymnody,” *The Journal of Liberal Religion*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Winter 2004) [http://meadville.edu/journal/2003\\_shelton\\_4\\_1.pdf](http://meadville.edu/journal/2003_shelton_4_1.pdf): 2.
8. Joseph S. Clark, *God’s Remembrance of Bethel: A Discourse Preached Before the Barnstable Conference, at their Annual Meeting, in Orleans, December 19, 1855, Illustrating the Rise, Growth, Decline and Recovery of the Churches Composing that Body* (Boston: Press of T. R. Marvin, 1856), 25.
9. Frederick Freeman, *The History of Cape Cod: The Annals of the Thirteen Towns of Barnstable County* (Boston: Printed for the Author, 1862) Vol. 2, 466, footnote 2.
10. Barnabas Bates later became a Unitarian. He served as an assistant postmaster during the administration of Andrew Jackson and was known for championing cheap postage. James Grant Wilson and John Fiske, eds., *Appleton’s Cyclopedia of American Biography on Virtual American Biographies* (New York: D. Appleton Co., 1887–1889), s. v. “Barnabas Bates.” <http://www.famousamericans.net/barnabasbates/>
11. This was handwritten on an old sheet, apparently written in 1865 or later, in the possession of the Falmouth Historical Society. The writing also says that the 1808 revival in Falmouth was called the “1<sup>st</sup> Reformation.” *First Congregational Church Records*, Rev. Henry Lincoln, *Biographical Data*” folder, Box II—First Congregational Church Records, Histories, Biographies, Misc., Falmouth Historical Society, Falmouth, Massachusetts.
12. Thomas Conant, *The Autobiography of Rev. Thomas Conant* (Boston: Andrew F. Graves, 1861), 138.
13. *Articles of Faith, and the Covenant, of the First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Mass. with a List of the Members* (Boston: Press of T. R. Marvin, 1851), 17–18. It appears that about 58% of those joining the church in 1809 were women. The ratio of women and men who joined the church that year was close to Lacey C. Warner’s estimate that “during the Second Great Awakening the ratio of female to male converts was three to two.” Lacey C. Warner, *Saving Women: Retrieving Evangelistic Theology and Practice* (Texas: Baylor University Press, 2007)



96, footnote 150.

14. In 1812, Rev. Henry Lincoln wrote the following letter, which described his recollection of some events in 1809 that increased our church's membership. That letter was published in a magazine of that time, which was important for Trinitarian Congregationalists. It should be noted that Lincoln wrote this letter after he himself had a conversion experience in 1811.

*The following is an extract of a letter to a gentleman in Hartford.*

*Falmouth, June 22, 1812*

*Sir,*

*HEARING you are a friend to vital religion, altho' a stranger to me, I take this opportunity to give you a brief account of the reformation, in my parish, thinking it may give you pleasure. There was a general revival of religion took place about three summers past, when great numbers entertained a hope of being savingly brought into the light and liberty of the gospel; I have been called to attend three reformations in quick succession, two in my own parish, and one in the borders of Sandwich. Among my own people about fifty were brought to rejoice in the faith of the Redeemer. The work appeared to be most solemn, heart-searching and effectual, without any tumult or disorder. The exercises of the subjects appeared to be spiritual, in which the deep depravity of the human heart was laid open. When they became established in the doctrines of grace, the change appeared so visible from nature to grace, from darkness to light, from sorrow to joy, that beholding spectators were filled with astonishment. Never did I witness such solemn, interesting, and affecting scenes. No tongue can describe to you the anxiety I felt, on the one hand for the distressed; and on the other the pleasing emotions of my soul, when relieved in their hearts, they sung with the highest elevation the praises of redeeming love. The concerts of our young converts, must have occasioned joy to the angels certainly they filled every Christian's heart with love, and his lips with praise. I often thought of the hosannas which were sang at our Saviour's triumphant entering into Jerusalem, and could not refrain from repeating these prophetic words, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou perfected praise.' Such seasons are rare, and I never may see them more. They can never be forgotten by, Sir, your humble servant,*

*H. T. LINCOLN*

*The Connecticut Evangelical Magazine; and Religious Intelligencer*, Vol. V, No. 9 (September 1812), 356–357. The concerts referred to above were a form of prayer meeting practiced by a number of American churches during this period. Those meetings were particularly focused on supporting foreign mission work.

15. Samuel Madan Dewey was admitted to membership in the Falmouth church on April 23, 1809. FCC2, April 23, 1809, 13.

The following entry appears in the church's records for 1809:

*July 19 – Voted unanimously the excommunication of Brother Saml M. Dewey as follows. – Whereas our Brother Samuel M. Dewey has heretofore in a public Meeting, without authority arraign'd the whole Church before him, to give account of their experiences & if not, publicly to humble themselves before him & Mr. Bates (a Baptist*

*Minister) & others not of our communion, & whereas he has spoken disrespectfully & uncharitably both of minister & people & in less than fourteen days after a public & solemn avowal of our holy covenant has broken it & of his own accord absolved his relations to us & by joining the Baptist Church, has denied this to be a true Church of Christ we do hereby consider him as excommunicated from our Church therefore, voted that he the sd Saml M. Dewey be & is considered as excommunicated—*

FCC2, July 19, 1809 meeting, 129.

During the War of 1812, Samuel Madan Dewey was a captain in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Artillery and served as the commanding officer at Fort Warren in Boston Harbor. John Ward Dean, ed., *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register* (Boston: The New England Historical and Genealogical Register, 1900), Vol. LIV, 133.

Dewey had a son, Samuel Worthington Dewey, who was born in Falmouth in 1807. That son became known for his 1834 stunt of secretly sawing President Andrew Jackson's figurehead off the *U.S.S. Constitution* in Charlestown Harbor, under the cover of a July storm. He later presented the severed wooden head to the Secretary of the U.S. Navy in Washington, D.C. At the time, Samuel Worthington Dewey and many Bostonians were Whigs who opposed Jacksonian Democrats. Johnson Rossiter and John Howard Brown, *The Twentieth Century Biographical Dictionary of Notable Americans* (Boston: The Biographical Society, 1904), Vol. 3 CO-ERI, s. v. "DEWEY, Samuel Worthington," 446–447. For the story and a picture of the severed head, see also Jim Coogan and Jack Sheedy, *Cape Cod Harvest: A Gathering in of Cape Cod Stories* (East Dennis, Massachusetts: Harvest Home Books, 2007), 73–76.,

16. However, in 1809 some individuals sought to leave the Congregational Society in Falmouth and not be taxed any longer to support Rev. Henry Lincoln, so they could support a newly formed Methodist church in our community. However, the society would not allow that or exempt those individuals from supporting Rev. Lincoln. FCS2, March 8, 1809, 11.

At that time, the society and the church were two different organizations. The society had legal standing in the Commonwealth and was responsible for the town's meeting houses and for funding the town's minister through town taxation and pew sales and rents. The church was a voluntary society without legal standing, though it did have jurisdiction over its own spiritual concerns, such as its covenant, confession of faith, and missionary offerings.

17. Falmouth church records do not indicate exactly which hymnal containing Watts' Psalms was chosen at this time. But many Trinitarian Congregational churches began using such hymnals, once they stopped using *The Bay Psalm Book*. Atkins, 6.

18. Rev. James Davis was a 1798 graduate of Dartmouth College. He was ordained in 1804 by Vermont Congregationalists to serve as an evangelist. In 1816, he was re-baptized, this time by immersion, and re-ordained as a Baptist minister. Conant, 155, 159–160.

19. Likely, the revival services held in the church then were done so with the permission of Rev. Henry Lincoln, because earlier, on May 8, 1809, the Congregational Society in Falmouth passed this vote:

*That no minister enter the Meeting Houses to preach, except Mr. Lincoln give his*

*consent, after being called upon.*

The above reference is to Falmouth's West End and East End meeting houses. At this time, the society owned both meeting houses and Rev. Lincoln preached in both. In 1857, the West End structure was moved off the Village Green and rebuilt across the street with a vestry beneath it and a new steeple, as it appears today. *FCS2*, 11. The East End meeting house on Sandwich Road is now the synagogue of the Falmouth Jewish Congregation. Mary Lou Smith, ed., *The Book of Falmouth: A Tricentennial Celebration, 1686–1986* (Falmouth: Falmouth Historical Commission), 272–273.

20. Conant, 83–85, 159.

21. Charles Washburn, "Historical Address Covering the 200 Years' History of the First Congregational Church in Falmouth, Mass.," *Two Hundredth Anniversary, 1708–1908, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts* (1908), 30. Washburn identifies the year of Rev. Lincoln's conversion as 1811. Rev. Henry Lincoln died in 1857 at the age of 91. A minister who had been led as a youth to have a conversion experience because of a sermon Lincoln preached wrote an obituary for him. That minister admired Lincoln. But in the obituary, he characterized Lincoln's ministry prior to Lincoln's conversion experience this way:

*During the former part of his ministry, in common with his brethren in the vicinity, the theme of his preaching was not 'Jesus Christ, and him crucified,' but 'do and live,' when, to use the language of another, 'the people neither did nor lived;' the result of which was great declension from the faith and practice of the Fathers, and spiritual darkness, even darkness which could be felt.*

*American Congregational Year-Book, For The Year 1858, Volume Fifth* (New York: American Congregational Union, 1858), 108–109.

22. Clark, 26–29. Clark indicated that the six Cape Cod ministers who were "touched by the grace of God" between 1810 and 1816 were "Burr of Sandwich, Pratt of West Barnstable, Lincoln of Falmouth, Johnson of Orleans, Fish of Marshpee, and Haven of North Dennis." Marshpee is known as Mashpee today.

23. Clark, 27. Clark referred to the following distinctions that were commonly made in Massachusetts communities at that time: the "parish" in Sandwich represented the voters in the town; the "church members" were those in actual covenant together as the church; and the "congregation" was made up of those who attended the church's services.

24. "Jonathan Burr vs. The Inhabitants for the First Parish in Sandwich," Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Judicial Court, in the County of Barnstable, September Term, 1812, At Barnstable, *Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Judicial Court of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*, Dudley Atkins Tyng, Esq., ed., Vol. IX, May 1812–March 1813 (Edward Little & Co., 1814), 277–299.

25. Clark, 28.

26. R. C. Bodfish. "A Grand Old Man," *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Mass., Vol. IX, No. 4, 25 April 1903.

27. FCC3, 12 May 1880 meeting, 200–201. It has sometimes been said that this Quissett Revival took place in 1809, not 1812. For example, see Theodate Geoffrey, *Suckanesset: Wherein May Be Read A History of Falmouth, Massachusetts, 1661–1930* (The Falmouth Publishing Co., 1930), 34. But 1812 was the correct year. The records of our church show that the Fishes' daughters, Cynthia (Fish) Lewis, Celia Fish, and Susanna Fish, as well as John Davis, Jr., became members of our church on November 22, 1812. FCC2, 15. That is compatible with the above 12 May 1880 account, which indicates that the three sisters and John Davis joined the Falmouth church in November following the revival. Also, the handwritten sheet cited in previous endnote number 11 identifies 1812 as the year the Quissett revival took place.

The Fish family and Rev. Henry Lincoln were apparently close, because the Fishes named one of their children, Henry Lincoln. Rev. Lincoln baptized that child on September 10, 1809. FCC2, 46.

28. Susanna's first name is spelled here as it appears in the Falmouth church's records.

29. FCC2, June 24, 1804, admission of new members, 10. Thomas Fish became a key figure in the church in the years after he joined. Then, on November 17, 1824, he was unanimously chosen by our church to be one of its deacons. He was then "consecrated to the Sacred Office of Deacons" by prayer and the laying on of hands. The record describes that event as, "Solemn, interesting and impressive, the remembrance of which we hope will never be forgotten and will be lasting as Eternity." FCC2, November 17, 1824 meeting, 162.

30. Bodfish, "A Grand Old Man."

31. Tom Morse, "Deacon Thomas Fish [1762–1848]," *Fish Tales, A Newsletter about the Fish/Morse Families*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (10 March 1994), 2–3. I thank Jennifer S. Gaines & Susan F. Witzell of the Woods Hole Historical Museum for calling my attention to this article. Tom Morse is a descendant of Susanna Fish.

32. It was said, by an unnamed source quoted by R.C. Bodfish, that after Susanna Fish died, the annual May 12<sup>th</sup> service was sometimes held in another family member's home or in a schoolhouse. Bodfish, "A Grand Old Man."

In 1846, Rev. Henry B. Hooker, then the minister of the Falmouth church, spoke at that annual anniversary service in Quissett. Hooker prefaced his brief description of that 1812 revival by saying,

*Long had the kind Spirit of the Lord withheld his gracious influence. But a set day to favor Zion came at last. Thirty-four years ago occurred the scene to which I now refer. The Spirit of God came not with the usual precursors of His coming. There had been the secret sighing of longing souls but the trumpet had not been blown in Zion, nor had they sanctified a fast, nor called the solemn assembly. Yet, in the sovereignty of infinite Love the Spirit came. It had not been supposed the day before that a cloud of mercy was about*

*to break over this retired body of the sea. No unusual tossings to and fro of sinful minds had intimated the approach of Zion's King. The whirlwind had not passed by, nor the fire, and it was not supposed, on the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup> of May, 1812, that that day would be distinguished from the series that had gone before it.*

*First Congregational Church Records "Interesting Anniversary" by Rev. Henry B. Hooker, D.D.* folder, Box II—First Congregational Church Records, Histories, Biographies, Misc., Falmouth Historical Society, Falmouth, Massachusetts.

On May 12, 1895, parishioners of the First Congregational Church of Falmouth were encouraged to "hitch up" and carry neighbors and friends to the TWELFTH OF MAY MEETING at 3 o'clock that afternoon at the home of Mr. Joseph Fish in Quissett to "receive a Pentecostal blessing."

"Worship Bulletin, First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Sunday, May 12, 1895," which is in the church's archives.

This annual memorial meeting in Quissett was also held in 1896. *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Mass., Vol. II, No. 7, Saturday, May 16, 1896.

33. Washburn, 36. Also, in 1971, Miss Cornelia Carey [1891–1973], a Fish descendant, gave an interview in which she described her childhood memory of attending one of those annual celebrations of the 1812 Quissett Revival. Morse, 3.

34. FCC2, December 18, 1816 meeting and Confession of Faith, 130–134.

35. FCC2, December 18, 1816 meeting, 130.

36. George Willis Cooke, *Unitarianism in America: Its Origin and Development* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1910), 118. Old South Church was the only early Boston Congregational church that remained Trinitarian. Then in 1809, Park Street Church was gathered as another such church in Boston.

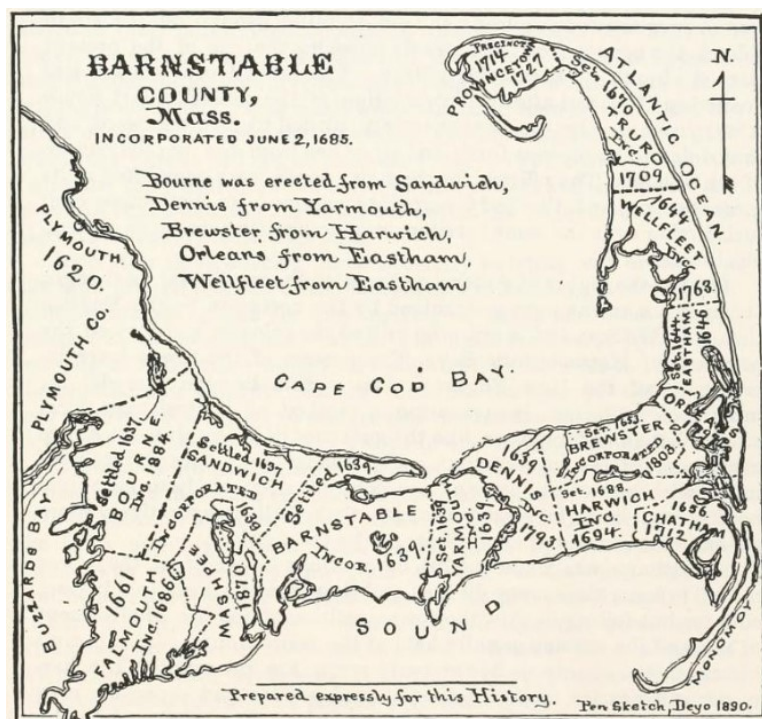
37. Of the fifteen Congregational churches on the Cape in 1800, three later became extinct, and two became and have remained Unitarian. Also, the Sandwich church, which rejected Rev. Jonathan Burr in 1811, became Unitarian and ultimately merged in 1965 with two Trinitarian churches—a Methodist church and the Trinitarian Congregational church Burr helped gather—to form today's First Church of Christ in Sandwich. Richard H. Taylor, *The Churches of Christ of the Congregational Way in New England* (Benton Harbor, Michigan, 1989), 99–102; Douglas K. Showalter, *The Congregational Heritage of the Barnstable Association of the United Church of Christ*, 2002, 1–17.

## Chapter 9 – Our Barnstable Association of the United Church of Christ

Our Falmouth church and the other Congregational churches on Cape Cod and the Islands have been in fellowship with one another ever since they were first gathered in this New World, beginning in the 1600s.<sup>1</sup> Having high regard for the autonomy of each individual congregation, our Cape and Island churches tended at first to have informal relationships of mutual support. However, as our society became more complex, our churches felt the need to organize themselves in more formal ways to strengthen their mutual support and extend their ministries beyond themselves through shared efforts.

### Conference of Churches in Barnstable County

On October 28, 1828, representatives from the Trinitarian Congregational churches on Cape Cod gathered at Chatham to create the Conference of Churches in Barnstable County. That organization was the forerunner of today's Barnstable Association of the United Church of Christ. At the time it was formed, that Conference did not have a written constitution. However, its stated purpose was "to promote, both in ministers and churches, an increase of evangelical piety." The following thirteen Congregational churches on the Cape at that time, including our own church, likely were the original members of this Conference:<sup>2</sup> (<sup>3</sup>)



Chatham  
East Falmouth  
Harwich  
Marshpee  
North Dennis  
Orleans  
Sandwich  
South Dennis  
S. Barnstable [Centerville]  
Wellfleet  
West Barnstable  
West Falmouth<sup>4</sup> [First]  
Yarmouth

Barnstable County map from 1890  
Simeon Deyo, *History of Barnstable County*, 1890

The delegates and ministers of the churches in this Conference met together on a regular basis, apparently twice a year. They met to share worship and help one another, to discuss current religious topics, and to work together to support special Christian ministries, which none of them could accomplish alone. It seems that in the early years, when travel was difficult, this Conference's meetings often took place over three days, with a host church providing hospitality.

### **April 1837 Meeting of the Conference of Churches in Barnstable County**

Fifteen member churches were represented, including our own, at the semi-annual meeting of this Conference, which was held in Orleans on April 26–28, 1837.<sup>5</sup> At that meeting the Conference adopted a constitution, which stipulated that,

*This Conference shall consist of the pastors of the Evangelical Congregational Churches in the county, and one lay delegate from each Church that has a pastor, or two lay delegates from each Church that has no pastor, to be chosen semi-annually.*<sup>6</sup>

In that time period, the term “Evangelical” was used to distinguish Trinitarian Congregationalists from Unitarian Congregationalists.

A significant amount of time at this three-day meeting was devoted to attending the annual meetings of benevolent societies. In the early 1800s, Congregationalists in America did not have a national denomination to sponsor their mission work. However, what Congregationalists did have then were a number of special, independent benevolence societies, which Congregational churches and their members supported.

Many of those independent societies were nation-wide or state-wide in scope, though they also had auxiliary branches that operated at the county level. It was such local auxiliary branches that held their anniversary meetings as part of the Conference of Churches meeting. For example, the following auxiliary societies held their meetings in conjunction with the Conference's April 1837 meeting:

**Sabbath School Society of Barnstable County.** Apparently, this society was formed in 1836 as an auxiliary of the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society. As its constitution noted, “Its objects are to strengthen the hands, and concentrate the efforts of the friends of Sabbath schools in this county—to encourage and increase the schools already formed, and to establish new ones wherever practicable.” Our church's minister, Rev. Henry Hooker, addressed this meeting as a representative of the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society. He was also elected as the society's Secretary at this meeting.

**Education Society of Barnstable County.** This society apparently was formed in 1835 as an auxiliary of the nation-wide American Education Society. The purpose of the AES was to “educate pious indigent young men for the Gospel ministry.” Noting the urgency of their work, the second annual report of the Education Society of Barnstable County,

presented at this 1837 meeting, began with these words:

*To the believer, who longs and prays for the complete triumph of the Gospel on earth, there cannot be a more distressing sight than the moral wastes of the world. He surveys his immediate vicinity, and within the county in which he resides, perhaps, there are two or three Churches destitute of pastors, and as many thousand people deprived of the preaching of the Gospel . . . Countless millions [of immortal souls] he knows have already gone [to eternity] without the knowledge of a Savior, and countless millions more will follow on in their footsteps unless the Gospel can be preached to them.*

**Domestic Missionary Society of Barnstable County.** This society apparently was formed in 1827. It was supportive of the work of the nation-wide American Home Missionary Society, whose purpose was to “supply the destitute in our own land with a preached Gospel.” The AHMS helped struggling churches across our country afford a settled minister. This Domestic Missionary Society particularly focused on the support of our Congregational churches in Barnstable County. It was described as being “in fact a mutual insurance company” for our county’s churches. Our church’s minister, Rev. Henry Hooker, preached the sermon for this annual meeting of that society. He based his sermon on Proverbs 14:34, “Righteousness exalteth a nation.”

**Barnstable County Seaman’s Friend Society.** This society was organized at Harwich in the spring of 1836. Its object was “to co-operate with the National Society in promoting the temporal and spiritual good of seamen, particularly those within our own limits.” At this 1837 meeting, this society noted its estimate that there could be as many as 4316 seamen in Barnstable County at that time. The society also reported that “recent intelligence has been received of a revival on board a whale ship from Falmouth, while on her way to the Pacific,—several of the crew experienced hopes of a change of heart.” It also said that the first Seaman’s Friend Society in Barnstable County was formed in Falmouth, though it was not then known if that society was still in operation. At this 1837 meeting, this Barnstable County society passed resolutions stating its views,

*That the cause of Seamen holds such a place in the conversion of the world, as to demand the highest effort for its advancement . . . That sailing on the Sabbath is a breach of the Fourth Commandment, and ever proper exertion ought to be made to discourage and prevent it . . . That no part of our own great community ought to exhibit a deeper interest in the cause of Seamen than the people of this county.*

**Auxiliary Foreign Missionary Society of Barnstable.** This society apparently was organized in 1824. It was an auxiliary of the nation-wide American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). As reported at this 1837 meeting:

*This Auxiliary made an effort the past year to obtain a Missionary to the heathen.*



*After the melancholy intelligence of the death of our beloved Munson, it was resolved to procure another person without delay to fill his place . . .*

This 1837 Conference of Churches meeting in Orleans caught the attention of a local newspaper, which gave this report of it:<sup>7</sup>

*Several flourishing and growing churches in this county have received their existence and have been sustained by the charity of sister churches. One of these, the coming year, will need no further aid, having gained strength to sustain its pastor; and having gained too, the ability and willingness to act efficiently in the cause of benevolence toward others.*

*A resolution was adopted by the Conference relating to the importance of religious periodicals in diffusing religious intelligence, and in awakening a deeper interest in behalf of the kingdom of Christ through the world. Far too few valuable religious journals, it was represented are taken on the Cape, to which was ascribed the fact that more was not done for the religious charities of the day.*

That newspaper also gave this report on spiritual conversion experiences on the Cape:

*There have been, and continue to be, precious, though not very large droppings of heavenly dew.*

### **Barnstable County Conference of Congregational Churches**

The Conference revised its constitution again in 1845 and 1846. In one of those revisions, the Conference changed its name to the Barnstable County Conference of Congregational Churches,<sup>8</sup> apparently to distinguish itself from other denominational groups then active in the county.

### **Ministerial Standing**

It had long been the custom in Massachusetts that the ministerial standing of Congregational clergy was overseen by the ministerial groups of Congregational clergy in the Commonwealth. Generally speaking, a church and its affiliated society would call a minister, but the local Congregational clergy group then took responsibility for examining, ordaining, installing, and overseeing that minister's standing. But that was to change.

In 1886, the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States recommended that the responsibility for ministerial standing should be transferred from ministers' Associations to church Conferences.<sup>9</sup> In 1901, the General Association of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts made the same recommendation.<sup>10</sup> In response, on November 12, 1902, our local Congregational ministers' group<sup>11</sup> transferred its responsibility for ministerial standing to the Conference of Churches in Barnstable County.<sup>12</sup> Thus, our Conference now

oversaw the ordination, licensing, installation, and [in earlier years] dismissal of the clergy serving the churches in the Conference. In that period, many other Massachusetts Congregational ministers' groups did the same thing. They transferred that responsibility to their local Conference. In our modern day, our Barnstable Association continues to oversee the ministerial standing of the clergy serving its churches.

### **Barnstable Association of Churches**

As American Congregationalism grew, along with the expansion of our country out West, there was a desire for greater uniformity in the names of the various types of Congregational bodies across America. Thus, it was recommended at the 1907 meeting of the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States that local or district bodies of churches and clergy be called "Associations" and that state bodies be called "Conferences."<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, as reported in 1911, the Barnstable Conference changed its name to the Barnstable Association of Churches.<sup>14</sup> The term "Association" still remains essential to the identity of this fellowship of churches and clergy.

### **Barnstable Association of the United Church of Christ**

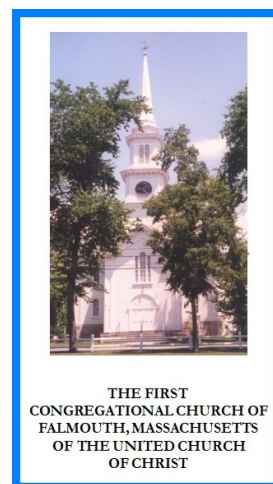
The twentieth century brought the 1931 merger of the National Council of Congregational Churches and the General Convention of Christian Churches. At that point, the Massachusetts Congregational Conference was renamed the Massachusetts Congregational Christian Conference.

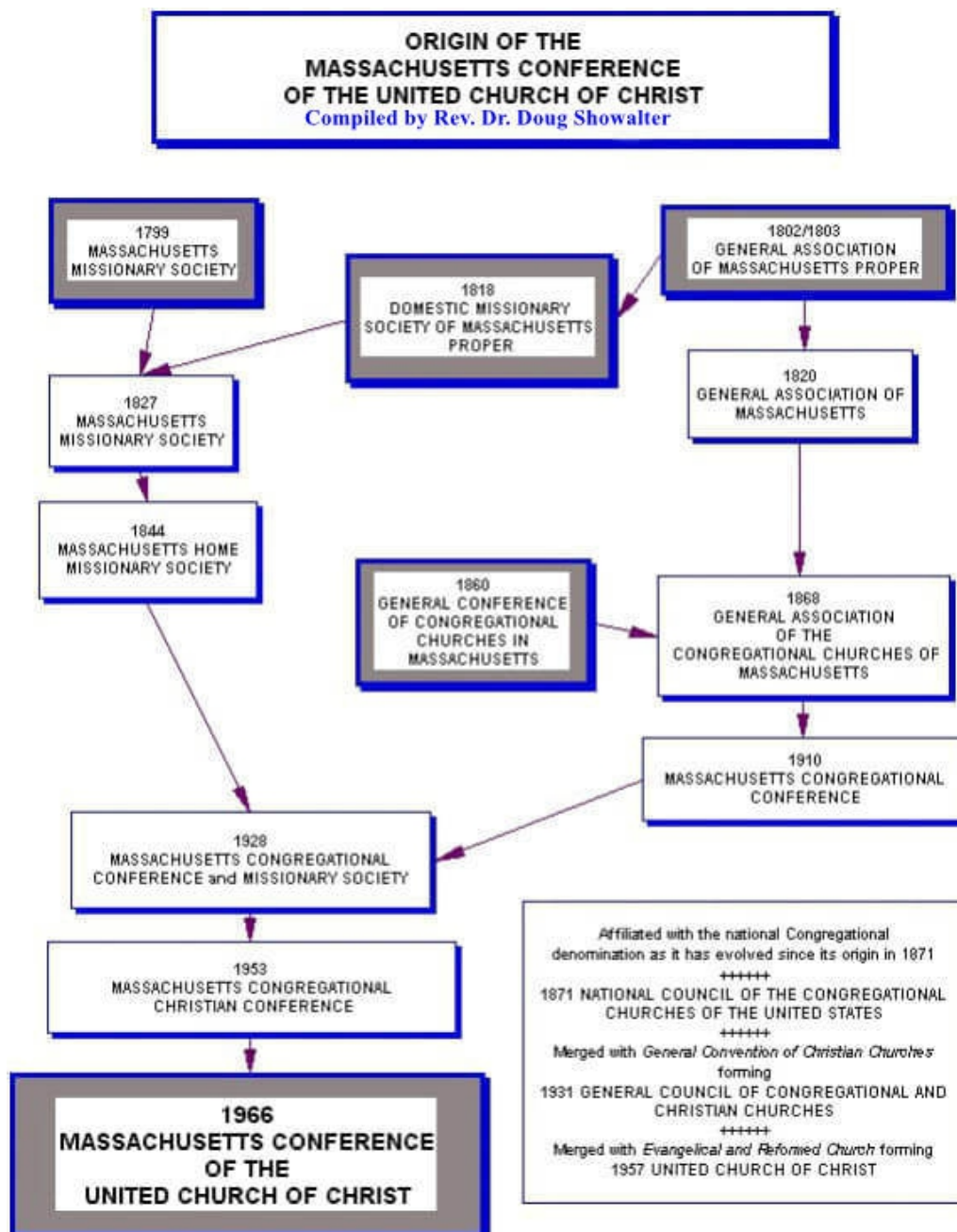
In 1957, the United Church of Christ was formed as a merger of the Congregational-Christian and the Evangelical and Reformed denominations. Accordingly, in 1966, our state conference was named the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ (MACUCC). At that time or soon afterwards, our Association was renamed the Barnstable Association of the United Church of Christ.

### **Our Falmouth Church and the United Church of Christ**

At the January 19, 1961, Annual Meeting of our Falmouth church, there was a unanimous vote of the sixty-seven church members present to ratify the "Constitution of the United Church of Christ" and "to become part of the United Church of Christ."<sup>15</sup> That vote was consistent with the history of our Falmouth church, for it had been a member of the national denomination of Congregationalists ever since one was first formed in 1871. And the United Church of Christ is the modern and legal successor of that national denomination.

See the diagram of the origin of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ on the next page.





**2024 Update:** On January 1, 2020, the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ joined with the Connecticut and Rhode Island Conferences of the UCC to form the **Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ**.

Our church has a long history of affiliation with the predecessor organizations of today's Barnstable Association and the modern Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ. In fact, our church and its minister likely helped found the original Conference of Churches in Barnstable County in 1828. And that heritage is still honored today, as the First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts of the UCC continues to maintain those membership ties and be an active participant in both the SNEUCC and its Barnstable Association.

## ENDNOTES

1. This chapter contains portions of Douglas K. Showalter, *The Congregational Heritage of the Barnstable Association of the United Church of Christ* (privately printed, 2002).
2. "Abstract of Statistical Reports," "Barnstable Association," *Minutes of the General Association of Massachusetts At Their Meeting In Falmouth, June, 1828 With the Narrative of the State of Religion, and the Pastoral Address* (Boston: Printed by Crocker & Brewster, 1828), these statistics reported in June of 1828 show those thirteen churches as the Trinitarian Congregational churches on the Cape at that time.
3. The Barnstable County image is from Simeon L. Deyo, ed., *History of Barnstable County, Massachusetts* (New York: H. W. Blake & Co., 1890). It is in the public domain.  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Deyo-map.jpg>.
4. At that time, our church was identified as the West church to distinguish it from the Congregational church then in Hatchville, which worshiped in the East End Meeting House.
5. *The Conference of Churches, and Anniversaries of Barnstable County, Holden at Orleans, April 26, 1837* (Boston: Torrey & Blair, Printers, 1837), 1. This booklet is at the Congregational Library in Boston.
6. *The Conference of Churches*, 3.
7. *Falmouth Register and Barnstable County Advertiser*, Vol. 1, No. XIII, Yarmouth Port (Mass), Thursday Evening, May 18, 1837.
8. *The Barnstable Conference of Evangelical Congregational Churches; Comprising the Constitution of the Conference, Together with a Concise Historical Sketch of the Churches, Based Upon the Manual of 1846, Revised and Brought Down to the Present Time* (Yarmouthport: Press of the Yarmouth Register, 1866), 3–4.
9. "Report on the Committee of the Pastorate and Ministerial Standing," *Minutes of the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States at the Sixth Session Held in Chicago, ILL, October 13–20, 1886* (Boston: Congregational Publishing Company, 1887), 319.

10. *1901 Annual Report of the General Association of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts*, 23, 24.

11. In 1902, the local Congregational ministers' group was known as the Cape Cod Association.

That ministers' group had its origin on July 25, 1792, when the ministers' group known as the Barnstable Association was formed at Yarmouth. Rev. Henry Lincoln of our Falmouth church was one of the founding members of that group. In 1823, that group affiliated with the state-wide Congregational ministers' group known as the General Association of Massachusetts, a forerunner of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ.

On October 7, 1835, the Barnstable Association was divided into two ministers' associations, with the Bass River as the boundary between them. The Association west of that river was called the Vineyard Sound Association. It also included the Congregational clergy on Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. The Association east of that river was called the Brewster Association.

On October 16, 1866, those two ministerial associations re-united to form the Cape Cod Association, which appears to have continued functioning at least until 1923.

12. *1904 Annual Report of the General Association of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts*, 48.

13. "Report of Committee on Polity," *The National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States, Thirteenth Triennial Session, Cleveland, Ohio, October 8–17, 1907* (Boston: Office of the Secretary of the National Council, 1907), 345.

14. *1911 Annual Report of the Massachusetts Congregational Conference*, 47.

15. *FCC7*, January 19, 1961 annual meeting, 211–212.

## Chapter 10 – Rev. Benjamin Woodbury: The Good Fight of the Faith

### An Expanded Sermon

*But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.* [I Timothy 6:11–13 NRSV]

### What Does It Mean To Be a Christian?

What does it mean to be a Christian? Does it mean that one will have a comfortable, easy life? Does it mean that one will be blessed with worldly success, riches, and widespread popularity? Does it mean that one will be spared all disappointments in life and kept from all harm in body and spirit? What does it mean to be a Christian?

As Christians, we are called to think deeply about our discipleship. We are called to consider seriously both the joys and the cost of dedicating our lives to Jesus Christ. Keeping that in mind, I will take you back in the history of our church this morning. I'll tell you about one of our church's early ministers who seems to have been a very dedicated Christian of deep faith.



Rev. Benjamin Woodbury  
Courtesy of Plain Congregational  
Church, Bowling Green, Ohio

I speak of Benjamin Woodbury, who was born in New London, New Hampshire, in 1792.<sup>1</sup> Some people call 1792 the year the Second Great Awakening began in America. Carrying forward much of the spirit of Jonathan Edwards from years earlier, that second Awakening was a time of strong religious fervor. It was a time of great eagerness to spread the Christian gospel far and wide in order to serve God, save souls, and make our world a better place in which to live. This period saw the founding of many Protestant missionary organizations in America.<sup>2</sup>

This was a time of great religious energy. It was also a period of change and turbulence, as Congregationalism continued to evolve and adjust itself to the changing society around it. In this period, our nation was still very young and expanding.

Benjamin Woodbury, who became one of our church's ministers, grew up in the midst of that Second Great Awakening. He was a member of the class of 1817 at Dartmouth College. After graduation, Benjamin taught school in Pennsylvania and Louisiana. He then returned to Massachusetts to study for the ministry at Congregationalism's Andover Theological Seminary.<sup>3</sup>



## **The Church of Christ in Falmouth**

I'll begin this story by giving you some background information. I should tell you that after the Revolutionary War and up until 1936, the needs of our congregation were met by two different organizations. One of those organizations was the church itself. The membership of our church was made up of men and women who were baptized Christians. Our church oversaw its own spiritual life, including its own covenant, sacraments, religious education, and missionary work. Under Massachusetts law in this period, churches had no legal standing.

## **The First Congregational Society of Falmouth**

The second organization associated with our church was the First Congregational Society of Falmouth. Made up of men age 21 and older, that society did have legal standing in the Commonwealth. That society was responsible for the major financial aspects of our church's life. For example, our society funded, built, owned, and maintained the buildings our congregation worshiped in. The society also oversaw our minister's compensation. Whenever a minister was called to our church, that decision was usually made by both our church and our society. However, our society's decision in such a matter had legal standing. Before the separation of church and state in Massachusetts, which was voted on November 11, 1833, the work of our society was supported by town tax dollars.<sup>4</sup>

## **Falmouth's West End and East End Meeting Houses**

Beginning in the year 1797, there were two Congregational meeting houses in Falmouth. On the west end of town, there was our new meeting house on the Village Green, built in 1796 with its Paul Revere bell. The following year, in 1797, a second meeting house was built in the east end of town, in the section known as Hatchville today. At that time, both of those meeting houses were owned by the First Congregational Society of Falmouth and supported by town tax dollars from their respective parts of town.<sup>5</sup> That second meeting house, which came to be known as the East End Meeting House, is now owned by the Falmouth Jewish Congregation.



East End Meeting House, 1897  
after 1842 rebuilding

For many years, Rev. Henry Lincoln, the longtime minister of our church on the Green, was paid by our society to hold worship services in both meeting houses.<sup>6</sup> That was done for the convenience of Falmouth residents in both locations. The division of Rev. Lincoln's time between those meeting houses was determined by the percentage of tax money collected on each side of town.<sup>7</sup> Rev. Lincoln began serving in Falmouth in 1790.

Years later, people began to be unhappy with that arrangement. In 1815, the society was

petitioned to settle another minister with Rev. Lincoln, but the society apparently took no action.<sup>8</sup> Another petition, likely similar to the previous one, was submitted to the society in 1818.<sup>9</sup> At its meeting in 1819, the society finally agreed to settle another minister with Rev. Lincoln for a period of one to five years “provided the former petitioners withdrew those petitions already presented the Legislature praying for a separation of the Society . . . ”<sup>10</sup> Apparently, this issue was beginning to become unpleasant, and the society finally acted to satisfy its critics.

### **Rev. Francis Whiting and Rev. Henry Lincoln**

In 1820, a colleague minister by the name of Rev. Francis Whiting was called to help Rev. Lincoln serve the people in those two meeting houses. To some Falmouth people, it seemed reasonable to secure a second minister. But as it turned out, that decision led to more trouble, not less.

The church people themselves were initially unwilling to call Rev. Whiting. But eventually they did call him. However, within months of calling him, the church reversed itself and voted to seek his dismissal. As it happened, the society would not agree to that. But even the society’s vote then to keep Rev. Whiting was deeply divided.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Second Congregational Church and Second Congregational Society of Falmouth**

The following year, in 1821, a number of our church members petitioned our church to leave it in order to form a new congregation in the east end of Falmouth, where the second meeting house stood. Apparently, the difficulties with Rev. Whiting and a lack of hope that those difficulties would be resolved contributed to the desire of those members to form a new church.<sup>12</sup> That new congregation was gathered on June 20, 1821.<sup>13</sup> It was called the Second Congregational Church in Falmouth. A Second Congregational Society of Falmouth was apparently formed about that same time in order to support that new congregation’s work. In August of 1821, our church finally dismissed its members, who previously petitioned to leave it, in order to gather that new church.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the creation of that new church, our First Congregational Society still owned the 1797 meeting house in the east end of town. Our society soon leased that meeting house to the newly formed Second Congregational Society, but our society still reserved the right to use that meeting house whenever it wanted to.<sup>15</sup>

### **Trouble in our Church and Society**

At this point, the finances of our society were declining. Some Falmouth taxpayers claimed that they no longer owed our society any taxes because they had formed a new religious society in town or joined an old one. It’s likely that many of those taxpayers were people who were involved with the new Second Congregational Society.



In response to this situation, the First Congregational Society took three actions.<sup>16</sup> First, the society rejected the claim of those taxpayers and decided to collect their tax money.<sup>17</sup> Second, the society set up a committee of three men to repel any trespasses or aggressions that might be made against either of the society's two meeting houses. Third, the society decided to postpone the installation of Rev. Whiting. At this point, two Ecclesiastical Councils had already met and decided not to install him, in part because of disgruntled members in our church. Our society didn't understand why people in our church were having such problems with one or both of their ministers. But the society knew that the discord was hurting both our church and our society. To put it mildly, things were not going well at this point for our church.<sup>18</sup>

Given the First Congregational Society's diminished financial situation, it felt it had no choice but to ask Rev. Lincoln and Rev. Whiting to work for less compensation.<sup>19</sup> Rev. Lincoln said he would give up both one-half his parsonage and \$100 in salary. But he would only give up that \$100 if Rev. Whiting would give up the same sum too. For his part, Rev. Whiting indicated that he would cheerfully receive whatever the society paid him. As Whiting said: "I trust I seek not yours but you."<sup>20</sup> It's apparent that the church's aged, long-settled minister, Rev. Lincoln, and the new, younger minister, Rev. Whiting, were not getting along with each other.<sup>21</sup>

On July 31, 1822, the new Second Congregational Church and Second Congregational Society in Falmouth called their own minister, Rev. Silas Shores.<sup>22</sup> Once there was a settled minister at the east end of town, Rev. Whiting's usefulness came into question. But that's not all. Our church people appealed to Rev. Lincoln and Rev. Whiting to reconcile their differences. Yet, by now, our First Congregational Society was even more deeply divided.

On October 6, 1823, Rev. Francis Whiting was dismissed by the First Congregational Society.<sup>23</sup> On October 20, the society took a vote, which indicated that fifty people were satisfied with Rev. Lincoln's ministry and forty-four were not.<sup>24</sup> Given that result, the society asked Rev. Lincoln if he would leave the church, despite his thirty-three years of service to it. Rev. Lincoln agreed to leave, on the condition he be paid an additional \$1250 over the next five years.<sup>25</sup> At the time, that may have been worth about two years of his cash salary. Rev. Lincoln closed his letter of resignation to the society with these words:

*From your affectionate and afflicted minister, Henry Lincoln.*<sup>26</sup>

About a month later, some society members pushed for a re-vote in the hope that Rev. Lincoln could stay. But they were voted down and Rev. Lincoln did leave. Two Ecclesiastical Councils were held on separate days, November 26–27, 1823. The first Council concurred with the wisdom of Rev. Lincoln leaving our church, the second with Rev. Whiting leaving.<sup>27</sup>

### **Benjamin Woodbury Comes to Falmouth**

The people in our church and society were now extremely divided. But they tried to put the best face on it. In March 1824, about three months after Rev. Lincoln left, they voted to call a

brand new minister by the name of Benjamin Woodbury, who was just finishing Andover Theological Seminary.<sup>28</sup> I don't know if Benjamin really understood how conflicted the situation was here in Falmouth, when he agreed to come here.

Benjamin Woodbury was 32 years old when he came to Falmouth in 1824. That was the same year John Quincy Adams ran for U. S. President against Andrew Jackson and Henry Clay. Benjamin was ordained in our church on June 9, 1824. Rev. Leonard Woods, a famous professor at Andover Theological Seminary, was the preacher at that service.<sup>29</sup> At the time, Benjamin was still single, but not for long. In October of that same year, Benjamin married Mehitabel Pettengill in Salisbury, New Hampshire. She was 28 years old and from a respected New Hampshire Congregational family.

70th Anniversary,  
1824. 1894.  
SUNDAY SCHOOL.  
CONGREGATIONAL  
WEEKLY CALENDAR.



We speak not in the words that man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. 1 Cor. 2 : 13.

First Congregational Church,

FALMOUTH, MASS.

Charles F. Washburn, Pastor.

On July 14, 1824, about a month after Benjamin's ordination, our church formed its first Sunday school.<sup>30</sup> That organization was called the Sabbath School Union of Falmouth. It was open to all children in our community. Meeting from May to October, it focused on teaching children to recite Bible passages, hymns, and the Calvinistic "Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism."

Rev. Woodbury served our church for 9 years. During that time, our Village Green meeting house secured its first wood stoves.<sup>31</sup> Apparently, people were tired of freezing in church.<sup>32</sup> Under Rev. Woodbury's leadership, our church supported Congregational missions at home and abroad.<sup>33</sup> We joined our sister churches on the Cape in sponsoring Rev. Samuel Munson as our missionary to Sumatra, under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.<sup>34</sup> We built up our church library. We encouraged family religion. And we strove to help the poor people in our congregation. Some of those individuals were likely widows and children whose husbands and fathers had perished at sea.

In this period of time, Congregational church members vigilantly watched the behavior of their fellow members. They believed it was their responsibility to do that because all church members had entered into a sacred covenant together when they became members. Churches readily suspended the membership of any parishioner whose sinful acts seemed to break their mutual covenant, thereby bringing dishonor upon Christ and their church. Churches hoped that by suspending backsliders, they would see the error of their ways and repent, so the church could forgive and reinstate them. During Rev. Woodbury's ministry, there were a number of suspensions and some reinstatements. Our members were suspended for such things as intemperance, bad language, disorderly conduct, and repeated absences from worship and the Lord's Supper.<sup>35</sup> At one point, our church also voted to suspend all those who had "gone to the

Methodists & Baptists.”<sup>36</sup>

During these years, there were difficulties between our church and the Second Congregational Church, which worshiped in the East End Meeting House.<sup>37</sup> It also seems that the Second Congregational Society was virtually dissolved not long after it was formed.<sup>38</sup> In 1829 and up until at least 1832, our First Congregational Society was once again providing for preaching at both of its meeting houses.<sup>39</sup> And once again, our society secured the services of a second minister, though on a temporary basis, to make that coverage possible.

### **Temperance and the Separation of Church and State**

Discontent was still stirring in our church and society. That unhappiness was likely aggravated by two new factors. In response to the Temperance movement that was then springing up in New England, our church decided in 1830 that even the prudent drinking of alcohol was a grave sin for Christians that was not to be tolerated. That decision created disruption in our church, as even very casual drinkers were suddenly barred from joining our church. And current church members became subject to suspension if they indulged in that behavior too.<sup>40</sup>

In 1832, our church sent visitors out to all our members to encourage them to sign a “Temperance Constitution.” That was a solemn pledge to refrain from all alcohol except for its use in medicine. There is little doubt that Rev. Woodbury was a key figure behind that new attitude in our church. Such temperance leaders insisted that when Jesus turned water into wine, it was only unfermented grape juice.<sup>41</sup>

Another stressful factor in this period was that the separation of church and state in Massachusetts was fast approaching. With that anticipated separation and the resulting loss of income from town tax dollars, it was going to be a lot harder for our society to fund our ministers and support our two meeting houses.<sup>42</sup>

### **More Trouble in Our Church and Society**

In November of 1831, a local newspaper published an anonymous letter from “Friends to Christianity,” which was highly critical of Rev. Woodbury.<sup>43</sup> Apparently, dissatisfaction with his ministry was growing.

In the summer of 1833, matters finally came to a head. According to a newspaper article on June 19, 1833, our church met to debate whether Rev. Woodbury should stay or not. Then our society quickly met to hear the church’s grievances against their minister.<sup>44</sup>

According to that article, some church members complained to the society that Rev. Woodbury was incompetent to teach them. Others complained that he didn’t satisfy them spiritually. Still others complained that he traveled too much or that he had been too strict in chastising them for their sins. Apparently, this meeting with the society was sobering. It caused

many in the church to be ashamed of their poor conduct toward their minister. For they now realized that Rev. Woodbury's "christian virtues, graces, and unwearied efforts" were all concentrated on the salvation of their precious souls. Now the church wanted to apologize to Rev. Woodbury and see what sacrifices it could make to be certain that he remained in Falmouth. Obviously sympathetic to Rev. Woodbury, that newspaper article referred to these events as "A Farce."

Another element of this story is that on June 10, 1833, the society itself voted not to sever its relationship with Rev. Woodbury in three months. In that vote, eighteen society members voted for such a dissolution, and twenty-eight voted against it.<sup>45</sup>

On July 3, 1833, another newspaper article indicated that one of our church members was telling people that Rev. Woodbury was a very poor preacher and that he should be exchanged for another minister. That member was brought before the church for questioning. In the midst of that session, Benjamin reportedly rose and said to the man:

*I am well aware brother [N.] that I am a very poor preacher as you have declared me to be; but had you done as well as I have told you to do, you would have done much better than you have!*<sup>46</sup>

### **Departure of Our Parishioners to Gather the North Falmouth Congregational Church**

In this same period, there was yet another unsettling development. Members of our church who lived in North Falmouth petitioned to leave our church and form their own Congregational society and church in their own section of town. The result was that the North Falmouth Congregational Church was gathered on August 15, 1833.<sup>47</sup> It's been speculated that the new temperance rules in our church heightened the eagerness of some of those North Falmouth folks to leave our church.<sup>48</sup>

In the midst of all these controversies and changes, Benjamin decided that he could no longer have a vital ministry in Falmouth. On August 12, 1833, the society decided by a vote of thirty-nine to thirty-three, to dissolve its relationship with him. The society also authorized a committee "in conjunction with the Rev. Benjamin Woodbury at his request to call a Mutual Council to dismiss our Rev. Pastor according to established usage."<sup>49</sup>

An Ecclesiastical Council of area Congregational clergy was duly called on September 19. After investigating the situation, that Council referred to Benjamin as their "beloved brother" and judged that he had "been willing to spend & be spent in the furtherance of the cause of Christ." They also approved of his dismissal, in part because "a Spirit hostile to his usefulness & peace" seemed to exist within our church and society.<sup>50</sup> Thus, Benjamin finally left Falmouth in the fall of 1833. As severance pay, he received a quarter year's salary and \$200.<sup>51</sup>

### Rev. Benjamin Woodbury, Home Missionary in Ohio

In 1835, Benjamin and his family made a great sacrifice. They moved to the then frontier lands of northwestern Ohio, so Benjamin could serve as a Congregational missionary there, under the auspices of the American Home Missionary Society. The Woodburys were among the first Europeans to settle in Ohio's Plain Township, south of Toledo. They bought a farm and built a log cabin on a sandy ridge beside a prairie. Their cabin wasn't far from forests and bogs, which bred malaria. At the time, that area was a wilderness with no roads, no bridges, and very few neighbors.<sup>52</sup>

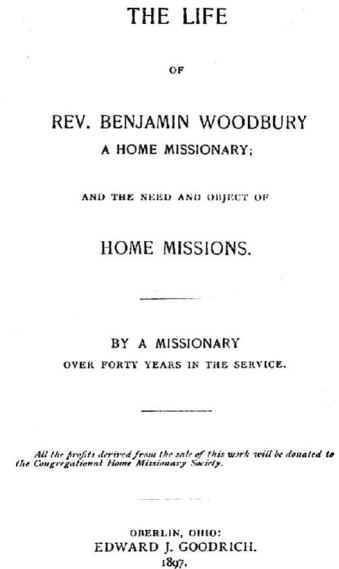
For ten years, until his death in 1845, Benjamin Woodbury spread the good news of Jesus Christ in that region. Riding out even a distance of fifty miles from his home in all kinds of foul weather, Benjamin even sought out counterfeiters, horse thieves, and murderers who were holed up in that wilderness. He hoped to get them to repent so they could know God's wonderful forgiveness. Edward Goodrich, Woodbury's biographer, gave this account:

*Starting out from his log cabin, clad in an ill-fitting threadbare overcoat sent by some Eastern friend who pitied the home missionary, and seated on a spirited horse—Old Mike, as he called him—ornamented with an old saddle minus pommel and crouper, with a hemp halter around his neck, and the saddle bags filled with tracts and Bibles, and whistling, 'Our flag is there,' or some other patriotic air, together with snatches of sacred song, such as 'Ye Christian heralds go proclaim,' 'He'll shield you with a wall of fire,' and with his face lit up with his accustomed smile as if he was conscious of being an ambassador from the highest court in the universe, and as he greeted everybody he met as if he had been an old acquaintance, with a kind word and the gift of a book written with the finger of God, Mr. Woodbury seemed to the passer-by more like an ancient crusader than like a humble home missionary.*<sup>53</sup>

Benjamin was particularly sensitive to his role in the lives of others. As biographer Goodrich also said of him,

*He could not endure the thought that any person whom he met should, by any oversight, or any fault of his, be condemned at last [at the Last Judgment] to hear the final and unrecalled sentence, 'Depart ye cursed.'*<sup>54</sup>

In 1844, Benjamin was able to report to the American Home Missionary Society that he had managed to secure two conversions and five hundred temperance pledges.<sup>55</sup> During the years of his Ohio ministry, Benjamin was able to gather several churches, including the Congregational



church in Plain Township of Wood County, Ohio.<sup>56</sup> It was said that when Benjamin gathered those churches, he always placed a pledge of total abstinence from alcohol in their articles of faith and practice. Like many others who supported temperance in this period, Benjamin did not believe that Jesus himself ever consumed intoxicating beverages.<sup>57</sup>

### **Oberlin College**

Rev. Woodbury came to be quite dedicated to the Oberlin Collegiate Institute formed in 1833, which eventually came to be known as Oberlin College. In the winter of 1834, even before he moved to Ohio, Benjamin served as a financial agent for Oberlin.<sup>58</sup>

As a fund-raiser in the college's earliest years, Benjamin raised serious concerns when Oberlin leaders were considering making Rev. Charles Grandison Finney, then a highly controversial evangelist, a professor of theology at the college.<sup>59</sup> As it turned out, Finney was hired despite Rev. Woodbury's concerns. Finney eventually became president of the college, and his considerable influence helped Oberlin become a prominent educational institution.

As a fund-raiser, Benjamin also raised concerns about Oberlin educating men, women, whites, and blacks all together. He did not believe the time had yet come when such mixing would be accepted and financially supported by many people. Yet, again, despite Rev. Woodbury's concerns, the college took the then more controversial path of admitting women along with men and also blacks along with whites—trail blazing policies for which the college eventually became famous.<sup>60</sup> As the years passed, some students from Oberlin spent time in Benjamin's home, and his hope was that his son would be educated there, though that did not happen because his son died prematurely.<sup>61</sup>

### **An Unfortunate Pastoral Call**

One day in those Ohio years, Benjamin and his wife Mehitabel made a pastoral call on a parishioner in trouble whose husband was out of town. Upon leaving that woman, Benjamin and his wife gave her "the usual salutation." A little later, Benjamin was shocked to learn that because he gave that parting salutation with his wife, he was said to have committed a crime! We can wonder: did Benjamin join his wife in hugging that woman or in giving her a parting kiss on the cheek? According to Edward Goodrich, this unfair accusation "nearly broke [Benjamin's] heart. He never recovered from the shock."<sup>62</sup>

Shortly before Benjamin's death in 1845, at the age of 53, his caring friends paid off his debts, so his family wouldn't be burdened.<sup>63</sup> At Benjamin's burial, beside the church he founded in Plain township, crowds of friends pressed around his grave. They wanted to express their thanks for all of Benjamin's sacrifices and labors in ministry on behalf of the people in their region.<sup>64</sup> From all I've read, Benjamin Woodbury apparently had great zeal for the cause of Christ. And despite the various difficulties that came into his life, Benjamin always tried to serve his Savior. And he always valued his Christian faith.

## What Does It Mean to Be a Christian?

I began this sermon by asking this question: “What does it mean to be a Christian?” Does it mean being blessed with an easy life, or riches, or success, or freedom from disappointments? I don’t think it means any of those things, necessarily. Rather, I think the answer to that question is this: being a Christian means to “fight the good fight of the faith.” The Apostle Paul expressed that in our scripture reading this morning from his first epistle to Timothy [I Timothy 6:12]. And it appears that Rev. Benjamin Woodbury exemplified that great spirit and commitment to Christ through his life.

## EPILOGUE

Rev. Woodbury went out to Ohio as a missionary of the American Home Missionary Society.<sup>65</sup> The AHMS was formed in 1826. Its mission was to settle ministers and gather churches in the new communities then being formed in the West.

The AHMS initially represented Presbyterian, Congregational, Dutch Reformed, and Associate Reformed churches, though the latter two denominations soon dropped out of the AHMS. Reflecting its Congregational and Presbyterian makeup, this society emphasized an educated ministry and worship that was orderly and thoughtful—not emotionally disruptive, like the boisterous camp meetings some other denominations sponsored out West.<sup>66</sup>

It’s helpful to know that Congregationalists and Presbyterians entered into a reciprocal relationship in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, which, among other things, allowed ministers of each denomination to serve churches of the other denomination. That relationship was established by the Plan of Union, agreed to in 1801 by the General Association of Connecticut and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Churches. The purpose of that plan was to promote cooperation between the two denominations and prevent duplication of their respective efforts.

That arrangement ultimately worked against Congregationalism, as many congregations that began as Congregational churches became Presbyterian. Also, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, many New England Congregationalists assumed that Congregationalism would not thrive out West, in part because of the widely spaced settlements there, unlike in New England.<sup>67</sup> That attitude continued into the 1840s, even at Andover Theological Seminary, as noted in the 1899 article “Why Congregationalism Did Not Extend,” which said,

*the leading spirits in the Andover Theological Seminary, up to about 1846, advised their students going beyond the boundaries of New England to become Presbyterians; with a general foolish notion which prevailed, that, while Congregationalism worked well in New England, it was ‘not adapted’ to ‘the West.’<sup>68</sup>*

Realizing that the “Plan of Union” had worked greatly to their detriment as a denomination, Congregationalists who gathered at the Albany Convention in 1852, unanimously

voted to terminate that Plan of Union, which, at that point, they still shared with “New School” Presbyterians.

Earlier, in 1837, Presbyterians were divided into Old School and New School factions. Old School Presbyterians held a conservative view of Calvinism and felt that the theology of some Congregational ministers out West among their Presbyterian churches was too liberal. With that division, Old School Presbyterians separated themselves from both the Plan of Union and the American Home Missionary Society.

By 1861, even the New School Presbyterians had withdrawn from the AHMS. It was then solely an organization of Congregationalists. However, it wasn’t until 1893 that the AHMS changed its name to the Congregational Home Missionary Society.

I did not find Rev. Benjamin Woodbury mentioned in the 8<sup>th</sup> (1834) and 9<sup>th</sup> (1835) reports of the American Home Missionary Society. However, the 10<sup>th</sup> AHMS Report of May 1836 indicated that Rev. Benjamin Woodbury was first commissioned to serve as an AHMS missionary on September 20, 1835. His missionary field was Plain Township, Wood County, Ohio. His commissioning was for twelve months. At the time of this report, he had worked for 7.5 months and received AHMS aid for 3.25 months. During that period thirteen people joined the Plain Township church by letter and two on exam. There were twenty subscribers to a temperance pledge and thirty Sabbath school scholars. The report noted:

*Lib. 20 vols.; church organized; contributions \$3.07; labours important in the surrounding region, which is fast growing in interest, and is white for the harvest.*<sup>69</sup>

Through the years, until his death in 1845, Rev. Woodbury sent numerous reports to the American Home Missionary Society, under whose auspices he served in Ohio. The following report from 1836 gave an account of his first year of ministry in Plain Township, Ohio. As Benjamin wrote:

*It is one year this day, since I commenced my labours, as your missionary, in Wood co., Ohio, and I now report to you the sequel. You will allow me first to say, that although I am not dispirited in view of the past year, I am far from being satisfied. I feel, indeed, that God, in the greatness of his goodness has blessed my humble attempt to serve him, while I have been all unworthy. I feel, that although I have been able to do something for the honor of his name, yet in all things I have come short of his glory.*

*The little church, which commenced its career in December 1835 by the gathering together of ten or twelve persons into covenant relations, now consists of twenty-four members. Seven others stand propounded for admission. The little Sabbath school has increased to a number rising of thirty. We have a Bible class, at present embracing our own young people, designed to embrace those of other families and communities, which we think will be large for the population and very useful. This Bible class, or young*



*people's meeting, embraces as one of its objects sacred music, and as it goes from house to house, in a circle of three or four miles, and all feel great interest to attend, the social benefit, I deem of no small consideration.*

*Of our auditory, I would say that they make great sacrifice, on the Sabbath.— Most of the Christian families shut up their houses—and are from one to two and a half hours on the road to meeting, drawn frequently by oxen . Some women walk four miles—others ride on horseback, as far as six, seven, and eight miles. In good weather our congregation numbers about seventy. This number, doubtless to you appears small. But were you here, your feelings, I think would be modified. Our little church meets indeed, at the centre of Plain, but it looks out by its members over the interests and perhaps destinies of five or six townships; and most probably, will prove the mother stock of as many churches, in a very few years. I was recently, the only ordained minister in the whole valley of the Maumee, from its mouth to Fort Wayne. Supplies have just been procured at Perrysburgh and Maumee.*

*We have formed a permanent Home Missionary Society in our church. This is of recent origin, and its results will be duly reported another quarter. Suffice it to say, that all the church embraces it heartily, and will respond as they are able. We have had no other hold on Foreign Missions, than the Monthly Concert. This has been attended in two places, and has yielded \$5. This will be forwarded in due time to the Board. We consider this quite important, as the first fruits of a very young vineyard. The Lord grant that the general harvest may be abundant. The Tract box did not arrive till late in the spring. I am now selling the volumes as I have opportunity—and the good seed is going in all directions. The Tracts so kindly given me, I distribute every where, at home and on my journeys—and they are doing good. I have nearly completed the survey of my field for the supply of the Bible. I have found but one destitute family.<sup>70</sup>*

## ENDNOTES

1. A basic source for Benjamin Woodbury's life is Edward J. Goodrich, *The Life of Rev. Benjamin Woodbury, a Home Missionary, and the Need and Object of Home Missions* (Oberlin, Ohio: Edward J. Goodrich, 1897). Goodrich indicates that he knew Rev. Woodbury and also served as a home missionary himself. Another source is George T. Chapman, *Sketches of the Alumni of Dartmouth College* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1867), 191. Chapman presents the following sketch of Benjamin from Dartmouth's class of 1817:

*\* BENJAMIN WOODBURY, A. M. the son of Benjamin and Zillah (Dow) Woodbury, was born at New London in 1792, and died at Plain, Ohio, Dec. 29, 1845, ae. 53. He taught an Acad. at Germantown, Pa, 1 year, and another at St Francesville, La, 2 or 3 years; then studied divinity in And. Theo. Sem. Some months in the class of 1824; was ordained pastor of the Cong. Ch. At Falmouth, Ms, June 9, 1824; dismissed Sept. 19, 1833; removed to the Maumee Valley in Ohio in 1835, settling at Plain, Wood Co. and*

*employed by the Home Missionary Society. His ministry was most successful, having in one revival 500 converts. He married Mehitable Pettengill at Salisbury in Oct. 1824.*

In contrast to Chapman, Goodrich [p. 9] indicates that Benjamin was born in Salisbury, New Hampshire, the same community his bride-to-be was from. Goodrich also indicates that Benjamin attended the same district school as Daniel Webster did and later supported himself at Dartmouth College by filling out diplomas. New Hampshire Vital Records at Concord, New Hampshire indicates that Benjamin was born on August 13, 1792 in New London, New Hampshire and that he married Mehitable Pettengill on September 30, 1824 in Salisbury. Larry Wert, *Descendants of John & William Woodbury of Beverly, MA. Also the Descendants of Richard Ober*. <http://www.woodburyober.com/d8.html> [181]

2. The Massachusetts Missionary Society, the earliest forerunner of the present Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, was formed in 1799. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was founded in 1810 by Congregational ministers in the General Association of Massachusetts Proper—another forerunner of the MACUCC. The first Sabbath school in Massachusetts was founded in 1810 in Beverly. The American Home Missionary Society was founded in 1826.

3. Chapman, 191.

4. *Falmouth Town Records 1831–1845*, November 11, 1833, 54. That November 11 vote was taken across the Commonwealth. In Falmouth itself, there were sixty-five votes for disestablishment and three votes for it.

5. *FCS1*, February 1, 1796. The society voted to divide the town in two, so residents in each section could have their own meeting house built with their own tax dollars. The dividing line of the town was said to run “from Tateket to the North shore.”

*FCS2*, March 8, 1813 meeting, 21. At this meeting, the society voted that the meeting house on the Village Green should be swept twelve times in the present year and that the meeting house in the east end of town was to be swept six times. At the society’s May 4, 1818 [*FCS2*, May 4, 1818, 34] it was voted “not to paint either of the Meeting Houses.”

6. *FCS2*, May 8, 1809 meeting, 11. It was voted “that no minister enter the Meeting Houses to preach, except Mr. Lincoln give his consent, after being called upon.”

7. *FCS2*, May 4, 1818 meeting, 34. It was voted “to choose a committee to examine the Society tax bill & see what proportion of preaching shall be in the several parts of thee Society.”

8. *FCS2*, March 11, 1815 warrant, 26; March 20, 1815 meeting, 27.

9. *FCS2*, May 4, 1818 meeting, 34.

10. *FCS2*, November 29, 1819 meeting, 39.

11. *FCC2*, June 12, 1820 meeting, 138. By a vote of twenty-two against and fourteen for, the church voted not to call Reverend Whiting to serve as Colleague Pastor with Rev. Lincoln. Furthermore, the church voted not to hear Rev. Whiting further as a candidate.

*FCS2*, June 12, 1820 meeting, 43. The society “voted to settle Mr. Whiting 50 in the affirmative & 19 in the negative.” In response, the church, on a date unnoted [p. 138], voted to have Rev. Whiting “attend prayers with us & to relate to us his experiences.”

*FCC2*, June 26, 1820 meeting, 138. After meeting with Rev. Whiting, the church voted to recommend to the society that he be employed for a year longer as a preacher among them. Rev. Whiting declined this, however.

*FCS2*, July 25, 1820 meeting, 46. The society voted “that the Rev. Francis L. Whiting be and hereby is invited to settle over the Congregational Church and Society in this town as joint Pastor and Colleague with the Rev. Mr. Lincoln for the term of three years permanent.” At the same meeting, the society increased this to a five year term.

*FCC2*, August 3, 1820 meeting, 138. “After a season of fasting & prayer & to ask council of God concerning the choice of a Pastor in colleague with me” the church voted to choose Rev. Whiting as a Colleague Pastor with Rev. Lincoln for three years, by a vote of twenty-one for and nineteen against.

*FCC2*, August 15, 1820 meeting, 138. The church voted to call Rev. Whiting to settle for three years as Colleague Pastor by a vote of eighteen for and fifteen against.

*FCC2*, August 28, 1820 letter, 138–139. Rev. Whiting accepted the call extended with this letter:

*To the Congregational Chh & Society in Falmouth*

*Brethren & friends*

*In compliance with your request, I hereby accept your invitation, commend you to God, & relying on his grace remain your friend & servant for Jesus sake. \_\_\_\_\_*

*Francis Lane Whiting*

*FCC2*, September 27, 1820, 139. An Ecclesiastical Council made up of five ministers and three lay delegates was convened, which approved of Rev. Whiting as a candidate, but decided not to install him “principally because of the great opposition in the Church in a large minority.”

*FCC2*, October 25, 1820, 139–140. Another Ecclesiastical Council made up of five ministers and two lay delegates was convened, which ran into similar difficulties. Also, because Rev. Whiting did not have his proper documents, this Council adjourned to December 20, 1820.

*FCC2*, December 13, 1820 meeting, 139. At a meeting held particularly at the request of members “at the East-end meeting house, adjourned to the house of Seth Robinson because of the cold,” the church voted to refuse to accept the result of the second Council and voted under present circumstances to recommend to the society that Rev. Whiting be dismissed or that he withdraw his answer.

*FCS2*, April 2, 1821 meeting, 50. The society voted “not to act on the petition of Nathaniel Shiverick & others in regard to a report the Church wishes to make to recommend to the Society the dismissal of the Rev. Francis Lane Whiting 33 in favor, 56 against.”

12. *FCC2*, May 24, 1821 meeting adjourned to June 4, 1821, 140. The church met to consider a request for dismission made by more than forty of its members who wished to gather a new church on the east side of Falmouth. As the petition of those members stated:

*We the subscribers being all members of the Congregational Church of Christ in Falmouth have been anxious to have the Gospel preached to us & to our fellow creatures in its purity in both meeting houses after all endeavors to accomplish that object have been disappointed in our attempts.—we now feel ourselves grieved in regard to many things that have taken place in the Church & Society (relating to Mr. Whiting) & see no prospect of a reconciliation being affected do feel it our duty & do request our dismissal from the sd Church that we may be organized into a separated Church.—Falmouth 4<sup>th</sup>, 1821.*

It has been said that the above petition was dated April 4, 1821. The April 4<sup>th</sup> date for this petition is noted in a typewritten chronology of the East End Meeting House in a file on that topic held by the Falmouth Historical Society. It is also given by Margaret G. Long in her booklet, *The Treasured Heritage of The First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts*, 1958, 16.

FCC2, June 4, 1821 meeting, 140. At this meeting, the church agreed to grant such dismissals but only if an Ecclesiastical Council was called and that Council deemed it appropriate for such a new church to be gathered.

13. Frederick Freeman, *The History of Cape Cod: The Annals of the Thirteen Towns of Barnstable County* (Boston: Printed for the author by Geo. C. Rand & Avery, 3 Cornhill, 1862), Vol. 2, 469. The June 20<sup>th</sup> date is also attested to in *The Barnstable Conference of Evangelical Congregational Churches; Comprising the Constitution of the Conference, Together with a Concise Historical Sketch of the Churches Based upon the Manual of 1848*, Revised and Brought Down to the Present Time. (Yarmouthport: Press of the Yarmouth Register, 1866), 18.

14. FCC2, August 19, 1821 meeting, 142. Apparently the conditions set out in the June 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the church were met, for at this August meeting our church dismissed from membership all the parishioners who had requested dismissal earlier in order to gather a new church in the east end of town. After listing the names of those seeking such dismissal, the record of this church meeting states: “The above petitioners were dismissed from us being organized according to a vote of the Church.”

15. FCS2, December 29, 1823 meeting, 82. The society voted “that the Second Congregational Society in this town be permitted to occupy the East End Meetinghouse (so called) whenever it is vacant—provided the (said Society) make a consideration to this Society therefor of the value of twenty-five cents annual, and every year, and sustain the expenses of the repairs of said House in the proportion to their use of it.” The society also voted “that this Society’s Standing Committee are hereby authorized to give to the second Congregational Society aforesaid a lease of the said East End Meeting House on the forgoing conditions whenever said Society shall desire it.”

FCS2, March 17, 1824 meeting, 88–89. The society “voted that this Society’s standing committee be and they [are] hereby authorized to make an arrangement with the Committee from the second Congregational Society in this town so that said Society can worship in the East End Meeting House (so called) whenever said Society does not interfere with the religious services of the first Congregational Society in said house—provided: that no legal right of the last named Society to said House shall be relinquished by such an arrangement.”

16. *FCS2*, 1821 meeting, 52. Not dated, though likely, the meeting took place on August 16 or shortly thereafter. The record of that meeting is preceded by the town collector's August 16 certification [*FCS2*, 51] that he informed the inhabitants of the meeting. Such certifications were sometimes recorded on the same day those meetings were held.

17. However, the next year, the society exempted Second Congregational Church Society members from paying such taxes to support the First Congregational Church Society.

*FCS2*, May 1822 meeting, adjourned to the day of the Representative Meeting at 3 o'clock, 58. The society "voted that the Society assessors of the first Congregational Society omit taxing the individuals of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congregational Society at the east end the ensuing years."

18. *FCS2*, December 15, 1821 warrant, 53. On the warrant of its next meeting, the society wished "to take into consideration the distressed situation of the Society at which time and place the Church Committee will lay before the Society the doings of the Church in order, if possible to have those things explained which we believe has been the means of so much difficulty both in Church and Society for this long time . . ."

19. *FCS2*, December 24, 1821 meeting, 53–54.

20. *FCS2*, February 25, 1822 meeting, 55. The meeting records letters dated that same day from Rev. Henry Lincoln and Rev. Francis Whiting, which indicate their response to the request that their compensation be decreased.

21. The following may give a glimpse of one reason why the relationship between Rev. Lincoln and Rev. Whiting was strained. *FCC2*, December 5, 1821, 142–143. A subcommittee of the church, set up to investigate the long-standing difficulties of the church, reported to the church that Rev. Lincoln received a letter from Reverend Mr. Codman of Dorchester, "wherein he represents certain things from his correspondent at Fryburgh which have gone much to the injury of the Revd Mr. Whiting & that Mr. Whiting produced documents that in the opinion of your committee did away all sd letter contained." Thereupon, the church voted "that the disagreeable impressions made by the above letter to the Revd Mr. Lincoln dated Dorchester December 7<sup>th</sup> 1820 are in our opinion without foundation & entirely done away."

22. Otis Thompson [Pastor of the church in Rehoboth], *A Sermon Preached at the Ordination of the Rev. Silas Shores, To the Pastoral Care of the Second Congregational Church in Falmouth; July 31, 1822* (Taunton: Printed by A. Danforth, 1822). Rev. Henry Lincoln was invited to give the charge to Rev. Shores.

23. *FCC2*, September 10, 1823 meeting, 145–146. The church set up a committee "to look into difficulties that exist in the Church." The church voted that "our conversation be all kept within the pale of the Church." The committee spoke with Mr. Lincoln, then reported back to the church that "Mr. Lincoln did consent to give Rev. Francis L. Whiting a recommendation such an one as the Church should think a suitable one to recommend him to any Church and Society as a Gospel Preacher."

FCC2, September 17, 1823 meeting, 146. The church voted to accept the recommendation written by Rev. Lincoln for Rev. Francis L. Whiting. The Church also voted to accept as satisfactory “the concession Revd Mr. Lincoln has made to the Church . . . respecting the alteration he has made in recording the report of the Church Committee made by them to the Church in October 1821.”

I do not find in church records a report made on that date. However, the reference may be to a subcommittee report signed November 28, 1821, which the church voted on at its December 5, 1821 meeting, as noted here in endnote no. 20.

FCC2, September 24, 1823 meeting, 146. The church voted to send for their two ministers to answer to “those things [charges] that appear to be laid before the Church.”

FCC2, September 30, 1823 meeting, 147. The committee appointed by the church on September 10 met “to have those difficulties settled that have been the means of so much disaffection among the brethren of the Church.” At this September 30 meeting, “the Committee heard the two Revd Gentleman with anxiety converse about things that were the cause of difficulties in the Church, nothing appeared to be done to give any satisfaction.”

FCC2, October 3, 1823 meeting, 147. The church heard the report of the committee and itself conversed “with the two Revd Gentleman for some time and pursuing every method to cause reconciliation but to no purpose.” The church voted for the two men to withdraw, then it voted the following which was to be relayed to them:

*That if the two Revd Gentlemen are by any means reconciled to Each other as the Gospel requires the Church will feel perfectly satisfied respecting those difficulties that have been the cause of so much disaffection among the brethren for so long time.*

The church then adjourned to meet a week later, at which time it intended to talk with the two ministers again.

FCS2, October 6, 1823 meeting, 70. It was “voted that the connection between this Society and the Rev. Francis Whiting be and it is hereby dissolved agreeably to a vote of said Society passed July 25<sup>th</sup> 1820.”

FCC2, October 3, 1823 meeting, 147. On this day, the Church Clerk recorded the following: “Agreeable to adjournment the Church again Meet to take into consideration the affairs of the Church but to there great disappointment and regret Revd Mr. Lincoln did not meet the Church according to promise therefore nothing could be done. 1<sup>st</sup> Voted to dissolve the meeting and discharge the committee from any further service.”

Following that entry in the church records is the following text [148]:

*Recommendation Rev. Henry Lincoln*

*We the First Church of Christ, in Falmouth, hereby testify, that we believe the Rev. Francis L. Whiting, who has been labouring among us in the ministry for three years past, is a gospel minister, sound in the faith and in Christian experience, whose moral and ministerial character is unimpeachable and as such, do hereby cordially and cheerfully recommend him to Christian fellowship and favour of all Christian Churches and Societies, wherever God in his holy Providence, may call him to labour in the Vineyard of our common Lord.*

*On behalf of the Church*

*Henry Lincoln, Pastor*

*Falmouth Sepr 17<sup>th</sup> 1823*  
*A true Copy attest*

*Consider Hatch – Church Clerk*

24. *FCS2*, October 20, 1823 meeting 72–73. Following the society’s vote by ballot, a committee was chosen “to wait on the Rev. Henry Lincoln Pastor of this Society and ascertain of him if he will leave said Society and if he will leave sd society on what terms he will leave it and that sd committee report at the adjournment of this meeting.”

*FCS2*, October 25, 1823 meeting, 73–75. The terms on which Rev. Henry Lincoln was willing to leave were presented at this meeting. He sought the same terms granted to the Rev. Mr. Gurney at Nantucket, who was recently dismissed by the North Society there.

25. *FCS2*, January 27, 1824 note, 83. The record indicates the issuance of a “note of promise to pay Rev. Henry Lincoln \$1250, one fifth yearly from the 26<sup>th</sup> of November last.”

26. *FCS2*, October 25, 1823 meeting, 75.

27. *FCS2*, November 24, 1823 meeting, 78. The society formed a committee to ask Rev. Lincoln if he wished to have the society’s vote to discharge him reconsidered. After a half-hour adjournment, presumably to consult with Rev. Lincoln, the society voted on whether or not it should reconsider the vote taken at its previous meeting to dismiss Rev. Lincoln. The issue was settled when forty society members voted in favor of a re-vote and fifty-two society members voted against it.

*FCC2*, November 26, 1823, 149–150. An Ecclesiastical Council of five area ministers and two area deacons was held on November 26, 1823, “for the purpose of taking into consideration the proceedings of the first Church and Society, in this place, relative to the dismissal of Rev. Henry Lincoln, their Pastor . . . ” It was said that given the difficulties, Rev. Mr. Lincoln requested the dissolution of his connection to the Church and Society. The Council voted unanimously that Rev. Lincoln be dismissed and said,

*In coming to the painful result, the Council cannot but regret, that the difficulties, which originated, not in any alleged defect of talents, orthodoxy, or piety, should have led to such a conclusion.—We are happy to learn, that through the long series of difficulties, with which he has had to contend, he has manifested so much forbearance, and given so little offence in things for which the Ministry might have been blamed. The Council however, think it proper to recommend that Rev. Mr. Lincoln conceive that in regard to certain professions respecting the settlement of a Colleague Pastor, he has through inadvertance, or the impulse of present feelings, in the various trying circumstance, in which he has been placed, express himself so unguardedly, as to make an impression on the minds of others somewhat different from that which existed in his own mind, and for this inadvertance he manifests his sincere regret.*

The Council expressed its continued affection for Rev. Lincoln and its hope he would engage in ministerial work in the future and be successful in it.

*FCC2*, November 27, 1823, 151. The same individuals who made up the November 26 Council also convened as an Ecclesiastical Council this day in Falmouth to consider the situation with Rev. Francis L. Whiting. As this Council decided:

*We are agreed in opinion that Rev. Francis L. Whiting's ministerial and religious character remains unimpaired, that he has not been intentionally the cause of any of the difficulties existing in this place, that he has maintained a forbearing spirit and conducted with propriety in the midst of difficult and trying circumstances, and has, during his continuance in this place, exhibited an uncommon degree, the qualities which should adorn the character of a christian minister . . .*

28. FCC2, March 5, 1824 meeting, 152. The church "voted unanimously to recommend to the Society to call Mr. Benjamin Woodbury to Settle in the Ministry among us."

FCS2, March 17, 1824 meeting, 87. The society voted "to give the Rev. Benjamin Woodbury a call to settle with us in the ministry." There was subsequent disagreement as to whether Rev. Woodbury should be settled for five years or indefinitely, as well as disagreement as to his compensation. But, at this meeting, it was decided that he could be settled indefinitely and receive compensation of five hundred and fifty dollars per annum.

FCC2, April 3, 1824 meeting, 152. The church "voted unanimously to Call Mr. Benjamin Woodbury to the Pastoral Care of the Church and we do cordially and cheerfully agree to receive him as our Pastor."

FCC2, April 3, 1824, 153. Rev. Woodbury's acceptance letter to the church read as follows:

*To the Committee of the first Congregational Church in Falmouth  
Respected Brethren in the Lord –*

*In the fear of God, and I trust with special reference to the indication of his will, I accept of the invitation of the Church communicated thro you to become their pastor.*

*This work I know is great. Who, of himself, is sufficient for it. The treasure is found in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might appear to be of God. There is my confidence, that God does the work making use of whom he will. –*

*To him I trust, I have already committed myself, for guidance and support, and now in compliance with his providences and by his grace, I yield myself heartily to his service in the Supervision and pastoral care of this Church looking to God for help: of whom, and to whom, and thro' whom, are all things.*

*Yours, respectfully  
In the Lord Jesus Christ  
Benjamin Woodbury*

*Falmouth Apl 3d 1824*

*N. B. This answer is on the condition that the Settlement be for an indefinite period.*

*B. W. \_\_\_\_\_*

FCS2, April 5, 1824, meeting, 90. Rev. Woodbury's letter of acceptance was reported at the society meeting. For the sake of comparison, considering the different roles of our church and our society at that time, I include Rev. Woodbury's letter to the society here as well:

*Gentlemen,*

*In complying with your request to settle among you as your teacher in spiritual things I am fully aware of the great obligations and awful responsibilities which I take upon myself. You have invited me to an arduous undertaking in the prosecution of which, you*



*will allow me to seek your advantage in seeking the best interests of the Church. Your moral welfare is involved in her prosperity. You are encircled in her arms of faith, of hope, and of prayers and from your numbers she looks for increase and strength, therefore in looking for her good I look for yours.*

*May God in mercy to us all order all the events relative to the transaction of my settlement with you, that our felicity may be promoted by doing all things to the glory of his great name. I am Gentlemen yours respectfully, in the Gospel.*

*April 3, 1824*

*Signed*

*Benj. Wood.*

29. Leonard Woods, *A Sermon Preached June 9, 1824 at Falmouth, Mass. at the Ordination of the Rev. Benjamin Woodbury* (Printed by Flagg and Gould, 1824). This sermon was based on the biblical text I Corinthians IX. 22: “I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” In this sermon, Woods explored the duty of ministers to behave in appropriate ways. He also cautioned Rev. Woodbury against straying from those ways. As Woods stated [p. 22]:

*While you hold yourself ready, in cases of no material consequence, to become all things to all men; guard against every instance of conformity, which would involve the sacrifice of principle, or degrade your holy office, or in any way give countenance to error. Watch and pray, lest you fall into this snare.*

As his final counsel to Rev. Woodbury in the sermon’s concluding words, Woods said [p. 26]:

*Receive it, then, my dear brother, as the sincerest, best wish of a heart that will never cease to love you, that in all cases of difficulty and trial, and through the whole course of your ministrations, you may be constantly illuminated and guided by the spirit of pure Christian devotion.*

30. FCC2, July 14, 1824 meeting, 155–158. Our church created the Sabbath School Union of Falmouth.

31. FCS2, April 2, 1827 meeting, 116–117.

32. FCS2, August 3, 1830 meeting, 126. The society “voted that if the members of what was formerly called the Second Congregational Society in Falmouth first pay into the Treasury of this Society Thirty Dollars then & in that case the committee of this Society be authorized to procure and put up in the East Meeting House one or more stoves as said committee shall think fit—and on no other conditions.”

33. FCC2, September 19, 1824 meeting, 161. The church formed itself into a “Society auxiliary to the American Education Society” and “voted to pay Twenty-five Cents a year all that are able or that are willing.” Likely, this was a reference to the American Society for Educating Pious Youth for the Gospel Ministry, which was first formed in Boston in 1815. This group became a national organization known as the American Education Society in 1826. At that time, it was supported largely by Congregationalists and Presbyterians and focused on giving financial aid to qualified ministerial students.

34. In 1834 Rev. Samuel Munson and his missionary colleague, Rev. Henry Lyman, began an exploratory tour of Sumatra for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Tragically, during that tour, on June 28, the two missionaries were speared and killed when two hundred Batta men on Sumatra mistakenly assumed the missionaries were their enemies. The tribe was cannibalistic and said to have cooked and eaten Munson and Lyman. See Chapter 11 – “Our First Foreign Missionaries: Rev. Samuel and Abigail Munson” in this book.

35. FCC2, July 22, 1824 meeting, 159. The church selected seven of its members to serve as a “standing Committee to look up defective members of the Church and report the same as soon as is Convenient.”

FCC2, December 28, 1825 meeting, 164–169. That committee gave a report, which concluded as follows:

*That whereas Hannah Gifford–Mary Rowley–Lydia Gifford–Easton Butler–Thankful Bourn–Joseph Davis–Priscilla Davis–Elizabeth Jones–and Elizabeth Bourn. Having been dealt with according to the discipline of the Chh. And the Gospel of Christ, and having been laboured with, in all forbearance, and long-suffering, and whereas they have shown an entire disregard to their covenant obligations–and duties arising from Chh membership–by absenting themselves from Chh communion and ordinances of Gods house, we therefore deem it our indispensable duty to exclude them from any further watch and care of the Chh over them,–and they are hereby considered no longer members of this Chh. A true Copy attest, Consider Hatch, Chh Cl’k.*

36. FCC2, August 16, 1826 meeting, 170. The church “voted the suspension of All those persons that have gone to the Methodists & Baptists.”

37. FCC2, July 16, 1828 meeting, 173. The church voted “to choose a committee of 5 to Look into difficulties existing between this and the second Chh.”

*The Barnstable Conference of Evangelical Congregational Churches*, 18. This booklet indicates that Rev. Silas Shores was dismissed on June 17, 1828 and that following his ministry at the Second Congregational Church its “pulpit was supplied by sundry ministers” until a new minister, Rev. Timothy Davis, was installed there on July 1836. It is possible that the difficulties facing the Second Congregational Society at this point were financial in nature. The same is suggested by a typewritten chronology of the East End Meeting House, which, quoting another source unknown to me, indicates that Rev. Shores was “obliged to seek dismission for lack of pecuniary support.” That typewritten chronology is in “East Falmouth Congregational Society, History of the Church, Notes,” *East Falmouth Congregational Society*, Box 1 at the Falmouth Historical Society.

38. FCS2, August 3, 1830 meeting, 126. It is worth noting that in dealing with the issue of providing stoves to the East End Meeting House, this society meeting made reference to “the members of what was formerly called the Second Congregational Society in Falmouth . . .”

As Frederick Freeman noted:

*In 1828, Rev. Silas Shores resigned his pastoral relation to the 2d Church, June 17; after which event, the Church and congregation, without compromising the identity of either*

*organization, again united for a time with the original or first parish in supporting public worship . . .*

Frederick Freeman, 473.

39. *FCS2*, September 12, 1829 warrant, 116. The subsequent meeting of the society was scheduled to “see what measures the Society will take to supply the two Meeting Houses with preaching . . .”

*FCS2*, September 21, 1829 meeting, 117. It was voted “to hire a minister to preach in the parish for the space of nine months.”

*FCS2*, November 11, 1829, memorandum of agreement, 118–119. An agreement was reached with Rev. Melancthon G. Wheeler to serve in that position. He was to be paid a salary of six hundred dollars salary and given thirty six dollars “to defray the expense of a horse.”

*FCS2*, July 19, 1830 meeting, 125. The society voted to ask Rev. Wheeler if he would continue his ministerial labors for the society and if he would be willing to be settled as a permanent minister of the society, at the same rate of compensation Rev. Woodbury was receiving. The society also voted to ask Rev. Woodbury if he would be willing to have Rev. Wheeler settled with him and if Rev. Woodbury would be willing to preach at the East End Meeting House “one half of the time in the future.”

*FCS2*, August 3, 1830 meeting, 127–128. A committee of the society reported that Rev. Woodbury was willing to have Rev. Wheeler settled with him and on the terms indicated. Rev. Wheeler was willing to serve an additional six months, but after an absence of six or eight months. At this meeting, it was voted “that the Rev. Mr. Woodbury and Revd. Mr. Wheeler be each requested to preach on the Sabbath alternately at the West and East Meeting Houses and that in their weekly parochial labors they alternately officiate in the different sections of the parish—(necessary and particular engagements always excepted).”

*FCS2*, April 4, 1831 meeting, 133–134. The society voted that both meeting houses should be “supplied with Pastors and Teachers.” Also, a committee of fifteen people was chosen “to mature some plan for the settlement of two ministers among us.” Apparently, Rev. Wheeler was no longer involved with the society at this point. In the months that followed there were continuing efforts to secure an additional minister, even on a temporary basis, so preaching could be provided at both meeting houses.

*FCS2*, April 6, 1832 meeting, 141–142. The society “voted to pay Revd Mr. Smith Eighty-five Dollars for past service.” Apparently, he served temporarily as the society’s second minister.

*FCS2*, May 5, 1832 warrant, 142. At its next meeting, the society was slated “to see if the Society will relinquish the taxes of all those persons who will form themselves into a Second Congregational Society before the first day of June next and support Preaching regularly in the East Meetinghouse.” Also, it was slated “to act on any other business that may be thought necessary for the purpose of forming a Second Congregational Society or supplying both Meeting-houses with preaching.”

*FCS2*, May 14, 1832 meeting, 143. The society “voted to remit the taxes of 1832 of all those persons who may be assessed to this Society, and who previous to the last day of June next shall form themselves into another religious society and provide and maintain a Minister, and public worship at the East Meeting-house for one year next ensuing.” It was also “voted to grant

the use of the East Meeting-house to a society contemplated to be formed agreeable to the preceding vote [above] on condition that the Society so formed shall contract with the Prudential Committee of this Society—to keep said house in good repair reserving the use of said House to this Society whenever it may be required for their own use.”

Frederick Freeman said the following:

*In 1835 . . . April 22, the associate connection of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2d Churches was dissolved, – in order to provide and maintain each its own minister. In 1835, Rev. Timothy Davis was installed over the 2d Church.*

Frederick Freeman, 473–474. However, in contrast to Freeman’s assertion, *The Barnstable Conference of Evangelical Congregational Churches* indicated that Rev. Timothy Davis was installed at this church the following year, in July of 1836. See endnote 37.

The First Congregational Society had at least some authority over the East End Meeting House until April 12, 1841, when it passed this vote:

*to relinquish and release all the right, title and interest, which this society has in and to the East End meetinghouse so called, unto the Second Congregational Society in this town . . .*

Apparently the Second Congregational Society had now reorganized, and the First Congregational Society was satisfied that they were now capable of overseeing that East End House.

FCS2, April 12, 1841 meeting, 206.

40. FCC2, October 17, 1827 meeting, 171. The church voted “to Choose some persons to Draw up some Resolves respecting the Cause of Intemperance .”

FCC2, May 1830 meeting, 174–175. The church’s Temperance Committee gave a report to the church which contained two resolutions. Those two resolutions plus an additional third one were adopted by the church at that meeting, as follows:

1. *Resolved that in the opinion of this church an habitual use of ardent Spirits except for medicinal purposes disqualifies a person for good standing in the Church.*
2. *Resolved, that it is the duty of every one connected with this church, in the spirit of meekness and of christian charity—faithfully to warn, reprove and exhort every member who shall make an habitual use of ardent Spirit except for the purposes above Specified.*
3. *Voted to add this resolution. Viz.—That no person making use of Ardent Spirit except as a medicine Shall hereafter be admitted as a member to this Church –*

FCC2, August 17, 1831 meeting, 176. The church chose a “standing committee to look into the conduct of those who Shall in anyway make use of Ardent Spirits.— except as A medicine.”

41. At the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our church in 1908, Rev. Charles H. Washburn, who served our church from 1890–1898, noted:

*The establishment of the Sunday School Union of Falmouth and the Report of the Temperance Committee of the Church are the great events of Mr. Woodbury’s ministry in this town . . . He was a laborious minister, successful in the winning of souls. In his 9 years, 3 months pastorate, 112 united with the church.*

Rev. Charles H. Washburn, “Historical Address Covering the 200 Years’ History of the First

Congregational Church in Falmouth, Mass, 1708–1908," *Two Hundredth Anniversary, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts, October 11, 12 and 13, 1908* (1908), 37–38.

42. Massachusetts was the last state in New England to accept the legal separation of church and state. That separation was voted on November 11, 1833 in Massachusetts.

43. *Barnstable Patriot*, November 2, 1831, Vol. II, No. 19. Apparently written by a disgruntled minority of Falmouth parishioners to capture the attention of the Falmouth community, this letter presents scathing criticisms against our minister in Falmouth. Although the letter does not mention Rev. Woodbury by name, there could have been little doubt it was directed against him. Among its comments, the letter said the following:

*Too long has the sacred fire of the soul slumbered in the breasts of this people [Falmouth], from the coldness and stupidity of a man who has the spirit of the world, but not the fervour and breathings of genuine devotion.—Too long have the captivating flatteries of our Pastor biased the judgment of his flock, and his unclerical levities given license for the commission. Too long has his want of zeal and devotedness in the cause of Christ fanned the breeze that has lulled us into a fatal security, and oh, too long have the awful penalties of a broken law, as well as the brightness and splendour of the upper world, been nigh veiled from our view by the poverty of his language and the frigid form of his worship . . . Say, ye worthies of Falmouth, have you not employed a man to devote his whole time to the good of souls? And does he not devote five sevenths of that time to his own private purposes and neglect the momentous duties of his sacred profession? We know you will answer in the affirmative. But you are so chained down to his interests, and bow with so much deference to his secular command, that we still fear you will choose to sacrifice over two thousand souls to the eternal indignation of an avenging God, rather than wound the feelings of one man, by giving him dismissal from office, or incitement [to a?] thorough reformation.*

44. *Barnstable Patriot*, Wednesday, June 19, 1833, Vol. III, No. 51.

*A FARCE.—The Church of the First Congregational Society in Falmouth, having become dissatisfied with their Pastor, recently convened for the purpose of taking into consideration the expediency of advising him to ask a dismissal of his little flock and seek employment in some other field of action. Many and weighty arguments were offered for and against this rash measure, but the love of novelty in a large majority of them predominated over their love for the man, and a committee was chosen to wait on him and give him the result of their deliberations. This done, he like a good and affectionate father, ever ready and willing to please his spiritual children, forthwith, in due form asked his dismissal. Immediately upon this the Society met to inquire into the cause of dissatisfaction of the church, and to deliberate upon the propriety of granting his request. When the members were separately interrogated for the cause of their complaint, some alleged that it was found in his incompetency to teach them, some in his inability to satisfy their spiritual wants, some in the exhaustion of his acquirements upon them, some in his travelling too much, and some found it in the chastisement they had received for their misdeeds; but the major part of them appeared to think that the ground of their*

*disaffection would not justify the measure they had adopted to procure satisfaction, and were not only heartily ashamed of their conduct, when the christian virtues, graces and unwearied efforts of their Pastor for the salvation of their precious souls, had been bro't into view, but were willing and anxious to apologize for it, and make some sacrifices to induce him to continue his labours among them. So it is probably that the Rev. Mr. Woodbury will remain where he now is, with perhaps a hundred dollars addition to his salary in [manifestation?] of the increasing confidence, approbation and good will of his constituents to reclaim the unfaithful, and labour for the conviction, conversion and final salvation of the impenitent.*

45. The exact sequence of events at this time is not entirely clear. For their part, the records of Falmouth's society and church show the following:

*FCS2*, June 10, 1833, warrant, 149. At its next meeting, the society was slated "to consider the expediency of dissolving the connection existing between the said Society and the Rev. Benjamin Woodbury as their minister and religious teacher, and to adopt such measures relative thereto as may be deemed necessary."

*FCS2*, June 10, 1833 meeting, 150. The society voted on dissolving its relationship with Rev. Woodbury in three months. Eighteen society members voted to dissolve that relationship; twenty-eight voted not to dissolve it. It was also voted for a committee of the society to discuss this matter with Rev. Woodbury. Rev. Woodbury returned word to the society that he would come and speak to them directly, but apparently at a later time.

In the recorded meetings of the church in 1833, I do not find any reference to concern about Rev. Woodbury's ministry or a discussion of it prior to a meeting of the church held in August 1833—exact date not given—*FCC2* August, 1833, 180. That August meeting was called in this way:

*at the request of [the Church's] Pastor to see if the Church will agree with its Pastor to call a mutual Council to Judge and determine on the expediency of giving him his dismissal and recommendation from this Church as its Pastor because of Seeming difficulties and to act accordingly.*

46. *Barnstable Patriot*, Wednesday, July 3, 1833, Whole No. 157.

47. *FCS2*, April 5, 1833 warrant, 145. The next meeting of the society was slated "by request of Stephen Nye and others to see if the Society will divide the proceeds of the Ministerial Funds; so that the contemplated Society in North Falmouth may receive their proportion of it; or to see if the Society will aid the said contemplated Society in any other way."

*FCS2*, April 15, 1833 meeting, 146. The request of Stephen Nye and others were indefinitely postponed. Once the separation of church and state became effective in Massachusetts in November of this same year and the First Congregational Society was no longer receiving the tax dollars of North Falmouth residents, the above request to divide the Society's proceeds was likely deemed irrelevant.

*FCC2*, July 21, 1833, 179. At this meeting, the church received and recorded the following letter, dated July 18, 1833:

*We the subscribers, members of the first Church of Christ in Falmouth, designing with*

*others to be formed into a church of Christ in North Falmouth, present to our brethren of the First Chh, this request viz. To be dismissed from the said First Church and considered as dismissed when the contemplated Chh in N. Falmouth shall be regularly formed. [Signed by:] Shubael Nye, Charles J. Nye, Abigail Nye, Abigail P. Swift, Prudence Nye, Bathseba Crowell, Abby J. Crowell, May Nye 2d, Mary Nye.*

*At this same meeting, the Church granted that, the above named persons be at liberty to join themselves to the contemplated chh when formed and in the performance of that act, they be considered as discharged from the watch and care of this church. [Signed:] Benjamin Woodbury, Pastor of the 1<sup>st</sup> Chh.*

On August 15, 1833 the North Falmouth Congregational Church was gathered. *The Barnstable Conference of Evangelical Congregational Churches*, 17.

48. Margaret Long, 17. As she noted:

*In July, 1833, 9 members of the Church withdrew to form the Congregational Church in North Falmouth. Though the records do not explicitly state it, it would seem that some did not agree with the strict belief of the Temperance Committee of the Church.*

49. FCS2, August 12, 1833 meeting, 153. The society voted, thirty-nine in favor and thirty-three opposed, to dissolve their relationship with Rev. Woodbury.

50. FCC2, September 19, 1833, 182–184. An Ecclesiastical Council convened at the church in Falmouth. Those in the council were: Revd Enoch Pratt of West Barnstable, Revd John Sanford of South Dennis, Revd Stephen Bailey of Wellfleet, and Revd Phineas Fish of Marshpee. Rev. Pratt was chosen Moderator, and Rev. Fish was chosen Scribe. After hearing from Rev. Woodbury and members of the society and church, the Ecclesiastical Council unanimously voted to advise that Rev. Woodbury's pastoral relationship to the church and society be dissolved. As they stated:

*We have now, brethren given our attention to what has transpired in regard to the removal of your Pastor—& our well beloved brother in the Lord. —& though on investigation we find no charges against him, that appear to us the worthy cause of removal; —Yet seeing he has been induced to ask a dismission.—& has already taken upon him a new engagement—& for as much as a Spirit hostile to his usefulness & peace does exist among you to some extent, —Therefore we are reluctantly are induced to say, that his relation to you must be dissolved . . . Our brotherly regards shall follow [Rev. Woodbury] & our —Prayer shall be for his prosperity. —that the Lord would have him and his in his holy care & keeping & preserve them all to his heavenly Kingdom . . .*

FCC2, 187. The church provided a recommendation for Rev. Woodbury, dated September 20, 1833, which appears in this record:

*We hereby, most cordially and affectionately recommend him to the Churches of the Evangelical faith in our land, as an able and faithful preacher of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

FCC2, 188. The society provided a recommendation for Rev. Woodbury, dated September 20, 1833, which also appears in this record:

*We a majority of the Committee of the first Congregational Society in Falmouth Chosen*

*to confer with the Ecclesiastical Council called to investigate the reasons Why the pastoral relations between the Revd Benjamin Woodbury and said Society should be dissolved—Cordially respond to the Sentiments contained in the Result of said Council in reference to said relation.—In our opinion no other reasons exist than those contained in Said Result—We have the fullest confidence—in the Morality Piety faithfulness and Christian Devotion of our Revd Pastor—and while we sincearly regret that he thinks he can no longer be useful among us—We cordially and cheerfully recommend him to the Kind attention and Christian regards of all persons . . .*

51. FCS2, October 28, 1833 meeting, 156.

52. Goodrich, 10–11.

53. Goodrich, 11–12.

54. Goodrich, 13.

55. 18<sup>th</sup> American Home Missionary Society Report, May 1844, 67.

56. *Commemorative Historical and Biographical Record of Wood County, Ohio: Its Past and Present* (Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co., 1897), 387–388. As that book notes:

*Plain Congregational Church—The beginnings of this branch of the Christian Church, in northwestern Ohio, were made in Plain township, November 27, 1835, by Revs. Joseph Badger, Isaac Van Tassel and Benjamin Woodbury, of the first part, and Elisha Martindale, Jacob Minton, Nathaniel Edgerton, Mehetabel Woodbury, Philetta Minton and Lydia Edgerton, of the second part. The meeting was held at Jacob Minton's house, near the present Plain church. There Mr. Badger presided as moderator, with Mr. Woodbury, scribe, and there the confession of faith and the articles of practice of the Presbyteries of Grand River and Portage were adopted for the guidance of the little Church then formed in the wilderness . . . Rev. Benjamin Woodbury, the first pastor, signed the record, December 7, 1845 for the last time, and twenty-two days after he died, aged fifty-three years. For over ten years he labored here, and also in Milton, West Millgrove, Freeport and Swanton, where he gathered small bodies of worshipers and organized churches.*

See also Eleanor Longbrake, *A Brief History of the First Presbyterian Church of Waterville, Ohio, One Hundred and Fifty Years, 1837–1987*, 9–10, wherein the following is stated:

*The Maumee Presbytery of 1837 covered only a small part of the area included in the present Maumee Valley Presbytery. Slow and difficult travel, before the highways and bridges, precluded frequent trips of more than ten or fifteen miles or so.*

*Among the early settlers there were a considerable number of Congregationalists from New England, along with the Presbyterians chiefly from Pennsylvania and the middle Atlantic states. Churches often included members from both traditions. Thus it was that Maumee Presbytery was organized on the accommodating plan, permitted then by the 'New School' Presbyterian church to which we belonged. According to that plan*



*churches could belong to the Presbytery while retaining either a Presbyterian or a Congregational type of government in the local church, or even a dual system for their two groups of members. Ministers of either denomination could serve in any church in the Presbytery. Plain Church near Bowling Green, now Congregational, was a founding member of Maumee Presbytery and continued as a part of the family until 1869. Old and New School Presbyterian churches, which had split partly because of the issue of accommodation, united in 1870 and that arrangement came to an end.*

*Waterville had 18 members in 1837. The other members of Presbytery when it was organized were Plain with 41 members, Maumee with 40 members, Perrysburg with 36, and Milton with 7. Apparently Milton was the now abandoned village of Miltonville located across the river from Waterville where route 65 leaves Route 64 . . .*

*The Rev. James Alvord had a very brief pastorate in the Maumee Presbyterian church, beginning in 1836. It is believed that he preached in Waterville too, in this formative period of our history.*

*However, the Rev. Benjamin Woodbury, founder and pastor of Plain Church, is the one credited by tradition with organizing the Waterville church. He had come as a missionary pastor from New England in 1835 and served as pastor at Plain from 1835 until 1843, when he moved to Waterville. In those days missionary pastors traveled by foot or horseback, and sometimes by canoe, to meet with small groups of people in several locations. He may have been including Waterville in his rounds even before the winter of 1836–1837, and continuing until he took up residence here in 1843. We have no tradition of any other minister during that period. We do know he was our resident pastor in Waterville from 1843 until about 1849 . . .*

I am thankful to Karen Deeds-Jarvie for her help in securing the Longbrake text and other information about Rev. Benjamin Woodbury's ministry in Ohio. I also thank the Waterville Historical Society of Waterville, Ohio, for providing access to the Longbrake text. The plan Ms. Longbrake refers to above was the Plan of Union formed in 1801.

The 11<sup>th</sup> AHMS Report of May 1837, page 55, indicated that Rev. Benjamin Woodbury was commissioned on September 20, 1836, to serve in Waterville, Ohio. Also, in contrast to what Ms. Longbrake said above about Rev. Woodbury's time of death, the 20<sup>th</sup> AHMS Report of May 1846, page 68, indicated that Rev. Benjamin Woodbury died on December 29, 1845.

57. Goodrich, 70.

58. Rev. Delavan L. Leonard, *The Story of Oberlin: the Institution, the Community, the Idea, the Movement*. (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1898), 157. As Leonard noted:

*February 10, 1834, Rev. Benjamin Woodbury, financial agent of Oberlin, wrote Mr. Shepherd from Andover:*

*January 17 I went to Ipswich and presented the claims of Oberlin to the female seminary under the principals, Misses Grant and Lyon. In the evening following sixty-five scholars met at Miss Grant's room to ascertain the practicability of young ladies going to the West as teachers of primary schools. On the next day arrangements were made for a collection in behalf of Oberlin. Miss Mary Lyon founded one scholarship. Miss Grant's teachers and scholars one and one-third, giving me in all \$350. They like the plan of*

*Oberlin much, but are much afraid that the female department will be neglected. Dear Brother, you will see to this. Do not let the female character suffer for the want of proper house, teaches, instruction, etc. A school on the model of Miss Grant's I think, would be the thing. Write Miss Grant acknowledging the \$200. She will name two beneficiaries and pay the remaining \$100 next spring. Also write Mary Lyon and thank her for her full heart in your course.*

Oberlin was founded in 1833 by two Presbyterian ministers, one of whom was John Shipherd, as noted above.

Anyone interested in securing additional information on Rev. Woodbury may find some at the Oberlin Archives at Oberlin College. In response to my query, Roland M. Baumann, Archivist & Adjunct Professor of History at Oberlin College, indicated that the following sources in their archives might prove helpful: Benjamin Woodbury papers (RG30/315); George A. Adams papers (RG 30/202); the correspondence series of the Office of the Treasurer; Robert S. Fletcher, *A History of Oberlin College* (Oberlin, Ohio: 1943); among other sources there.

59. Rev. Delavan L. Leonard, *The Story of Oberlin*, 243–244. As Rev. Woodbury wrote from Boston to the Board of Trustees at Oberlin in the spring of 1835:

*You urge haste in soliciting and forwarding aid. I fear the appointment of Mr. Finney has an influence on subscriptions . . . I do think this appointment is exceedingly impolitic. He cannot be a suitable man. He has had no systematic course in preparation for it. New England is full of men well qualified . . . I do intreat the Board not to appoint him. It will make, too, more than half the difference in my subscriptions . . . The name of Finney is nearly destructive to Oberlin in New England . . . The theology of New England is not Finneyism, nor is it right to place Finneyism at the head of that institution. It is not tested, is too immature, crude, and denunciatory. Let him preach the gospel and not undertake to transform the theology of the churches, or to lead our youth over the ground which he himself has not trodden. Oberlin had enemies enough before, but now they will increase tenfold, and it is unnecessary. Mrs. Woodbury says she likes Mr. Finney for professor, or some one like him, better than some of another stamp. I do not much object to him, only as all the prejudices of the community against him will be transferred to Oberlin, when another man even of his theology would have been acceptable. But may God direct, and save Oberlin and save our country.*

At the time, Finney was sharply criticized for his perceived departure from high Calvinism and for innovations he introduced into his revival meetings.

60. Rev. Delavan L. Leonard, *The Story of Oberlin*, 244–245. As Rev. Woodbury wrote from New Hampshire in the spring of 1835 to Mr. Shipherd, one of Oberlin's founders:

*I sympathize with you in all your plans to train the best quality of minister for the onset now to be made on a dark and ungodly world. That is, in every feasible plan for this, and will go with you to the **ne plus** in attaining it. But, can you bring into one seminary blacks and whites, male and female? I mean where they must mingle in recitation, boarding and study? I do not believe it. If the time ever comes, it has not come now.*

In that letter, Benjamin also expressed his concern that if blacks were admitted to Oberlin in large numbers, eventually all white students would choose to leave it, and the intended character of that

institution would be completely changed. As author Leonard commented in 1898 about this letter and Woodbury's previous letter, which expressed concern about Oberlin hiring Charles Finney:

*they seem to reflect the convictions and prejudices of the average intelligent and Christian American of five-and-sixty years ago, and so help us to understand the attitude taken by multitudes towards Mr. Shipherd's experiments.*

Thank goodness Woodbury's reservations did not influence Oberlin's determination to admit both women and blacks.

Edward Goodrich's 1898 biography of Rev. Woodbury states the following on page 61:

*He fully believed that 'God is no respecter of persons,' but recognizes the common brotherhood, unity and equality of the human race, both male and female.*

Goodrich makes that statement after telling how Woodbury was so touched by the stand Oberlin students and a professor took in rescuing a fugitive slave from imprisonment, in defiance of a federal law requiring his return, that Woodbury "immediately left his home and family" to raise funds for Oberlin. Actually, the incident Goodrich refers to here seems to be the famous so-called Oberlin-Wellington Rescue, which took place in 1858, about thirteen years after Woodbury's death. Despite the apparent factual inaccuracy, Goodrich's statement suggests that Rev. Woodbury would have been fully in favor of such a rescue.

61. Goodrich, 57, 61.

62. Goodrich, 126, 127.

63. Goodrich, 127.

64. Goodrich, 130.

65. Douglas K. Showalter, *Notes on the Congregational Home Missionary Heritage of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ* (privately printed, 2004).

66. Colin Brummitt Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier: With Particular Reference to the American Home Missionary Society* (New York: Octagon Books, 1971), Copyright 1938 by The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 30–33, 376–394, 401–405.

67. Colin Brummitt Goodykoontz, 149–150.

68. "Why Congregationalism Did Not Extend" *The Congregationalist and Boston Recorder*, August 29, 1889, Vol. LXXIV, No. 35, 287.

69. *The Home Missionary*, May 1836, 60. This was a publication of the American Home Missionary Society.

70. "Ohio. From Rev. B. Woodbury, Plain, Wood co., O." *The Home Missionary*, December 1836, 144–145.

## Chapter 11 – Our First Foreign Missionaries:

### Rev. Samuel and Abigail Munson

A Sermon

If you will, imagine that it is the year 1832. There is an air of excitement in our Falmouth church. At its June meeting, as flowering trees and plants send their pollen into the air, our congregation takes its own dramatic step to bring about new spiritual life.

At this June meeting, our parishioners vote to join our sister Congregational churches on Cape Cod in a new endeavor. We vote to join our Barnstable Association<sup>1</sup> churches in sponsoring a missionary. On our behalf, this missionary will carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to people in a distant land who've never been exposed to that wonderful good news and all its blessings.<sup>2</sup> As the risen Christ said to his disciples before he ascended to God:

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.*<sup>3</sup>

In 1832, virtually everyone in our congregation can recite that verse by heart. And we all feel the great burden of it. In the past, we New England Congregationalists have been blessed by preachers and missionaries who've come to our shores to build and renew our Christian faith. But now, in 1832, we realize that it's our turn and our solemn responsibility to pass on that precious faith to others, who, as we believe, so deeply need it. We are certain that human souls in the darker corners of our world are depending on our help to bring the light of Christ to them, so they can experience eternal salvation. (<sup>4</sup>)



Islands of Sumatra, Java with its city Jakarta (Batavia in 1800s), and Borneo

At this time, it costs \$600 to support a foreign missionary for a year. [That's about \$21,875 <sup>5</sup> in U.S. currency in 2024.] In 1832, as a joint effort, our Congregational churches on Cape Cod are able to raise even more than the \$600 needed. Our Falmouth church raises \$95 for this purpose.<sup>6</sup> The largest contribution beyond our own comes from our sister Congregational church in Sandwich, which raises almost \$139 for this great cause.



Seal of the ABCFM

Our missionary will be secured through the organization known as the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.<sup>7</sup> That's a long name, so people often refer to that group as the ABCFM for short. The ABCFM was originally formed in 1810. It marked the beginning of American foreign missions.<sup>(8)</sup> The ABCFM was created by Congregational ministers in Massachusetts in response to a request from four Andover Theological Seminary students. Those students felt a call from God to send the good news of Jesus to foreign lands where Christ was not known. Before the ABCFM was created, most American Protestants considered foreign mission work to be impractical or even fanatical.<sup>9</sup>

In 1812, the ABCFM sent out its very first missionaries. They went to India. In 1819, the ABCFM sent its first missionaries to Hawaii, then known as the Sandwich Islands. As time passed and financial support from Congregationalists increased, the ABCFM was able to send missionaries out across the world and to native Americans in our country as well.

In the year 1832, the ABCFM was eager to expand its missionary efforts in Southeast Asia. With that goal in mind, the ABCFM paired our Barnstable Congregational churches with a young Andover Theological Seminary student who was nearing graduation. That student was eager to be a missionary in Southeast Asia. His name was Samuel Munson.

Samuel was born in 1804 in New Sharon, Maine. But before his parents moved to Maine, they had lived on Cape Cod. In fact, Samuel's mother was from Truro. Her maiden name was Lombard. When Samuel was ten years old in Maine, both his parents succumbed to what was then called "the cold fever." They were buried in the same grave.<sup>10</sup> Fortunately, Samuel was then taken in and raised by a friend of his father.

Samuel graduated from Bowdoin College in 1829. A faculty member at the college described Samuel this way:<sup>11</sup>

*He was a person of marked accuracy of judgment, more distinguished for this trait than for originality or imagination . . . he was a patient student, and unwilling to leave a subject without understanding it. [Samuel] was of a contemplative cast of mind, prone to think long and intensely on the wretchedness of his fellow men, and highly susceptible of emotions of pity and compassion . . . Few, perhaps, have in stronger exercise, that faith*

*in God, and those desires for usefulness, which adopt at once the language, 'Here am I, send me.'*

During a chapel service at Bowdoin, Samuel was deeply stirred by the sermon of a visiting missionary from the Sandwich Islands. Samuel came away from that sermon, longing “to fly as a herald of the Cross” to the inhabitants of those islands.<sup>12</sup> This wasn’t feasible at the time. But this experience led Samuel to begin asking a vital question. He kept wondering, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”<sup>(13)</sup>



Bowdoin College in the 1830s  
Artist: Esteria Butler, T. Moore's Lithography

After Bowdoin, Samuel entered Andover Theological Seminary. Andover already had a reputation for educating many of the Congregational ministers who served as ABCFM missionaries. At Andover, Samuel became deeply involved in missionary organizations and concerns. Samuel’s personal diary at Andover showed that he regularly prayed for the promotion of Christ’s kingdom in distant parts of our world.<sup>14</sup>

If you will, imagine that it is now the month of September in 1832. Following our church’s June meeting vote to sponsor a missionary, our church people here in Falmouth are now growing ever more excited. By this time, Samuel Munson has graduated from seminary. He has also spent some weeks on the Cape. During those weeks Samuel likely visited our church and the other Cape churches which are now supporting his dream of becoming a foreign missionary.

The date for Samuel’s ordination has been set. It will take place in the Orleans Congregational church<sup>15</sup> on Wednesday, October 10th of this year. At our September church meeting, our Falmouth congregation votes that our minister and as many of our church people as possible should attend Samuel’s ordination.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, the day of ordination arrives. It is a historic event. We can imagine that the church in Orleans is thronged with worshipers that day. They’ve come from all over Barnstable County, as well as from the Islands and beyond the Cape. Under changing autumn leaves, the Orleans churchyard is filled with carriages and tethered horses. Within the meeting house, Congregationalists are dressed in their Sabbath best. They fill the meeting house’s box pews. There are even some reporters there from local newspapers.

Cape Codders of this time are used to sending their men off on long ocean voyages to distant lands. Even so, sending a missionary to work for Christ in a far away, non-Christian culture is still big news, which most Cape Codders want to read about.



Samuel Munson sits in the midst of that large assembly. He is only twenty-eight years old. We can imagine that his heart trembles as he sees all those faithful people around him. They have gathered here to affirm his divine call and to seek God's blessing for him.

The preacher for this ordination is Rev. Phineas Fish. Rev. Fish is a Harvard graduate. He has long served as a Congregational missionary to the native Americans in Mashpee. With great earnestness, Rev. Fish ascends the Orleans pulpit and preaches on the theme "The Coming of the Kingdom of God."<sup>17</sup> As Fish says:

*How many [Christian] missions have been planted already, and among how many different nations! . . . What difficulties have not been surmounted by christian zeal. By means of it, the Gospel has past over seas and continents . . . It has tamed the ferocious and intractable—elevated the stupid and insensible—emancipated thousands, once enthralled, the willing slaves of sin and satan. With a full and flowing tide this work of benevolence is moving on . . . Almost every day brings to view some new aspect of Christ's [coming] kingdom [on earth].*

Then, looking down from his high pulpit, Rev. Fish speaks directly to young Samuel. As he says:

*[Samuel:] Beside the common share you will have in the prayers of the christian world—you may depend on the peculiar, tenderest remembrance at a throne of grace by these [Barnstable] churches . . . by the solemn transactions of this day, [these churches] have assumed to themselves the honour of calling you their own . . . Go forth then, Dear Sir, in all the moral grandeur of your enterprize.*



Rev. Benjamin Woodbury  
Courtesy of Plain  
Congregational Church,  
Bowling Green, Ohio

Rev. Benjamin Woodbury, our Falmouth church's minister at this time, speaks at this ordination too. On behalf of our Cape churches, Rev. Woodbury extends the "Right Hand of Christian Fellowship" to Samuel. As Rev. Woodbury says to him:

*Dear Brother, we would embrace you in the arms of christian love, and faith, and go along with you, in our sympathies as we best may, as you shall take a final parting of the parental roof, and home, and of kindred and dear friends, as you shall turn your eyes for the last time on your own beloved America . . . Yes go, and we will go with you . . .*<sup>18</sup>

We can well imagine that this ordination was a very moving one for all who were present. It was moving, especially when Samuel kneeled before the congregation, and all the Congregational ministers on the Cape solemnly gathered around Samuel to ordain him through prayer and the traditional "laying on of hands." It was moving, in

part, because everyone realized that once Samuel sailed overseas, he would never return to these shores. He would be expected to spend the rest of his life at his mission post.

In the months following Samuel's ordination, he did two major things. First, he went to Boston, then Bowdoin College again, to study medicine for use in his missionary work. Second, Samuel married Abigail Waldo Johnson.<sup>19</sup> Abigail was twenty-six years old and from Brunswick, Maine.

Samuel was fortunate, for he found a woman who was willing to give up all that was familiar in her life in order to risk the terrible hardships, diseases, and other dangers, which often confronted foreign missionaries of that period. There were great sacrifices to be made. But Abigail and Samuel were willing to make them. They were willing to make them, for the sake of doing the good work of Christ, to help others who were not as fortunate as they were.

On June 10, 1833, about a month after their marriage, Samuel and Abigail set sail from Boston on the ship "Duncan." They were accompanied by fellow missionary Rev. Henry Lyman and his new wife, Eliza Pond, from Boston. Henry Lyman was from Northampton, Massachusetts. He was about five years younger than Samuel. Henry received his undergraduate degree from Amherst College. And, like Samuel, he too was a graduate of Andover Theological Seminary. In fact, those two men were roommates at the seminary.

The ABCFM was sending those four relatively young adults to Batavia, the Dutch port city in Java, known as Jakarta in our modern day. And from there, Samuel and Henry were to explore the nearby islands, including Sumatra and Borneo, to assess the possibility of more missionaries being sent there. The ABCFM sent Samuel and Henry off with these parting words:

*You 'go bound in the spirit' to uncongenial climes, and distant nations but partially civilized, and opposed to the religion of Christ; 'Not knowing the things that shall befall' you . . . Your labours may be soon terminated by death. But you have given yourselves to Jesus Christ without reserve, for the work of missions among the perishing heathen. That work, you know, he regards with peculiar favour; for none is so near like his own and that of his beloved apostles. He has pledged to you, everywhere, and in all circumstances, his special presence, assistance and comfort.*<sup>20</sup>

The voyage of the Munsons and Lymans to Batavia took about 3.5 months. Their ship was new and fast for its time. And, to the satisfaction of both couples, both liquor and profane language were prohibited on board.<sup>21</sup> At one point in the open ocean, the "Duncan" encountered a pirate ship. The Munsons and Lymans were afraid those pirates would attack and enslave or kill them. But that terrible pirate ship, with its ominous black hull and black masts, simply sailed past them.<sup>22</sup>

Those two couples were sea-sick most of the voyage. And Eliza Lyman had such a problem with her lungs that there was fear she would die. However, after arriving in Batavia and



receiving medical attention, she recovered.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the great heat in Batavia, which quickly sapped the energy of Europeans who weren't used to it, the Munsons and Lymans made that city their base of operations.<sup>24</sup> They set up a medical clinic there. And they handed out Christian religious tracts and scripture to the Malay and Chinese people who seemed eager to receive them.<sup>25</sup> (<sup>26</sup>)



The city of Batavia about 1780

*Tropenmuseum of the Tropical Royal Institute (KIT)*

Over the winter of 1833–34, Samuel and Henry observed the culture around them, including Batavia's many Chinese temples with their idols. During this time, both men studied Chinese. Samuel also began to learn the Malay language. During those months, Samuel corresponded with our Congregational church people back here on Cape Cod. As Samuel wrote:

*The obstacles which the church will have to encounter in preaching the gospel here are many; the enemies that oppose are numerous and formidable; yet in the name of the Lord we shall conquer. 'Behold I come quickly,' says the Lord of the harvest, 'and my reward is with me.' Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.*<sup>27</sup>

Like many Congregationalists of his day, Samuel believed that the coming of Christ was drawing near. Thus, as a faithful Christian, he felt he had to do all he could to help prepare for that glorious day when God's reign would fully appear and all evil would be conquered.

On February 27, 1834, there was a joyful event. In that strange and foreign land, Abigail Munson gave birth to a baby boy. She named the child Samuel after his father. Writing back to Abigail's parents in Maine, Samuel announced this blessed event and said of their new-born son:

*We hope and pray that the Spirit of God will prepare his heart for the work of a missionary.*<sup>28</sup>

Young Samuel is said to have been the "first American child ever born on the island of Java."<sup>29</sup>

After the region's Dutch Governor General gave them permission to proceed, Samuel and Henry headed off in April of 1834 to explore nearby islands as potential mission posts. During their travels, they saw many things which intrigued them, including nutmeg and clove trees.<sup>30</sup>

Now, imagine that it is the month of June in 1834. It is during this month that Samuel and Henry come to the island of Sumatra. They are intent on visiting the interior of this island, where the Batak (or Batta) people live. It is a land of thick forests and steep hills. The Bataks have a reputation for being fierce warriors and cannibalistic. Yet, here's what Samuel writes in his journal on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, the day before he and Lyman set out on their inland journey. Samuel wrote:

*We have engaged our interpreter, an opas, and eight coolies. The head man of a Batta village is to be our interpreter. We shall go well provided and guarded at every point. Our greatest danger is, that our faith in God will not be strong enough.*<sup>31</sup>

In the days that follow, Samuel, Henry, and their party struggle through forests, ravines, bugs, and heat. They travel ten or twelve hard miles a day to reach the Bataks. On June 28th, at four o'clock in the afternoon, Samuel and company happen upon a log fort in the forest. They approach the fort to explain their mission through their interpreter. Yet, as their party moves forward, two hundred Batak men suddenly come running at them from two different directions. Those men yell at the missionaries and point their spears and muskets at them in threatening ways.

As soon as this commotion begins, the interpreter and most of the other hired men in the party disappear into the woods. Samuel, Henry, and just three other men are left to face all these Batak warriors by themselves alone. Samuel and Henry toss their hats and some tobacco over to this deadly mob to appease it. But the mob remains greatly agitated. The missionaries then hand over their pistols and a musket to the mob. When that doesn't work, they call out for their interpreter to return.



A Batak village

Artist: Johannes Ykema, before 1991  
Tropenmuseum of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT)

Suddenly, a musket in the hands of the Bataks is discharged. Wounded, Henry Lyman falls to the ground. The mob lets out a shout, which is returned by Batak men in the nearby fort. Then, the mob rushes Samuel Munson. His body is soon run through with a spear. Samuel falls to the ground. One of these two missionaries is not killed instantly. Remarkably, he kneels on the ground in prayer. He prays, until a second cruel blow from the Batak finally ends his life.<sup>32</sup> (<sup>33</sup>)

The mob shouts again. The next person killed is the expedition's cook. The remaining two expedition members manage to run away. They hide in a

nearby thicket all night until they can escape very early the next morning.

The dead bodies of these slain missionaries and their chef are then cooked and eaten by the Batak men. Some Batak women had begged to have the lives of these visitors spared. But, because their lives weren't spared, those Batak women now refuse to have any part in cooking their remains.<sup>34</sup>

Rev. Samuel Munson and Rev. Henry Lyman were the first ABCFM missionaries ever to be murdered.<sup>35</sup> It was said that their deaths were the tragic result of a misunderstanding. Apparently, those Batak men mistook these missionaries for other white men who had invaded their island earlier. In the wake of this great tragedy, other Batak people in nearby villages were infuriated. They recognized that these missionaries wanted to help the Batak people. In their fury and with even greater violence, those other Bataks burned down the village of those who killed the missionaries. They also destroyed their fields and killed as many of those villagers as they could find.<sup>36</sup> They acted totally out of revenge.

According to one 19th-century writer, the deaths of Munson and Lyman "sent a thrill of horror through the American churches." Yet, within three years the ABCFM continued their explorations in that particular area.<sup>37</sup>

After Samuel's death, our churches in Barnstable County received a letter from a London Missionary Society minister in Batavia. That minister had helped the Munsons and Lymans when they first arrived in Java. As that minister said in his letter, a government agent was now claiming that he had warned Munson and Lyman not to visit the Bataks. Yet, as that minister said, it was more likely the case the same agent actually assured Munson and Lyman that such a trip would not be dangerous.<sup>38</sup>

Widowed after less than thirteen months of marriage and left in a strange land with an infant son in her arms, Abigail Munson soon returned home to America. When her son Samuel grew up, he became a captain in the U.S. Army. Abigail herself died in Farmington, Maine, in 1891. She was 85 years old.

In 1835, about five months after the murder of Munson and Lyman, a professor at Andover Theological Seminary gave a stirring address in their memory. Here's what that professor said, in part:

*A tribe of Cannibals in Sumatra have inhumanly killed and devoured our beloved brethren, who went there from the purest benevolence. What now shall we do to avenge the innocent blood of these missionaries? Shall we petition our government to send forth an army to inflict signal punishment upon those monsters of cruelty, and to teach them, that American citizens cannot be injured with impunity? Or shall we pray God to send down fire from heaven to destroy them?*

*No brethren. The God whom we worship, is the God of love. And our Saviour, infinitely merciful himself, requires all his disciples to copy his example, and to cherish a*

*benevolent, compassionate, forgiving temper towards the worst of the human race . . . Let the Officers of our missionary Board take special pains to send the precious blessings of the gospel to the Island of Sumatra, and to the interior of that Island, the place where Lyman and Munson were slain. And let the missionary, selected for the purpose, be solemnly instructed to preach the gospel to the inhabitants of Sumatra, beginning at Batta.*<sup>39</sup>

What a story! And to realize that it's all true and all part of the history of our Falmouth church and our sister Congregational churches on the Cape so many years ago!

Of course, there are ways in which our theology today is different from that held by Samuel Munson and Henry Lyman. Also, we modern Christians look at people in distant, non-Christian lands in a different way than they did. There are differences between then and now. Even so, I think this story challenges all of us modern Christians. It challenges us to ask ourselves these questions:

Question #1: How deep is our dedication to Jesus Christ and to spreading Christ's wonderful good news and deeds of love to others?

Question #2: And how much are we personally willing to sacrifice to spread that good news and love?

## ENDNOTES

1. It was then known as the Conference of Churches in Barnstable County.
2. *FCC2*, June 1832 meeting, 167.
3. *Matthew* 28:19–20a.
4. The map of Indonesia with the islands of Sumatra, Java, and Borneo is from the United States Central Intelligence Agency's World Factbook. It is in the public domain.  
[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indonesia-CIA\\_WFB\\_Map.png](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indonesia-CIA_WFB_Map.png)
5. According to the web site, *Official data .org*: “\$600 in the year 1832 is worth \$21,875.44 today.” <https://www.officialdata.org/us/inflation/1832?amount=600>
6. A total of \$650.24 was raised. Of that amount, \$95.00 was raised by our West Falmouth church. The contributions of other Cape Congregational churches were as follows: Sandwich, \$138.49; East Falmouth, \$24.00; Friend in Mashpee, \$2; West Barnstable, \$61.00; South Barnstable, \$24.00; Yarmouth, \$39.25; North Dennis, \$27.73; South Dennis, \$13.66; Brewster, \$16.75; Chatham, \$50.00; Orleans, \$53.58; Wellfleet, \$60.00; Truro, \$44.78.  
Phineas Fish, *The Coming of the Kingdom of God: A Sermon Preached at Orleans, October 1832*

*on the occasion of the Ordination of Rev. Samuel Munson, as a Missionary to the Heathen* (Barnstable, Printed by Thompson and Underwood), circa 1832, Appendix.

7. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions had an auxiliary organization on Cape Cod, which was organized about 1824. That organization was called the Auxiliary Foreign Missionary Society of Barnstable. When the Barnstable Conference of Churches in Barnstable County was formed four years later, on October 28, 1828, in Orleans, it developed a very close relationship with that Auxiliary society. The Cape's Congregational churches appear to have been members of both organizations. See Chapter 9 – "Our Barnstable Association of the United Church of Christ" in this book.

8. The image of the ABCFM seal is from *The Day Breaking; or, Light in Dark Lands* (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1870), Title Page, 41.

9. For more information on the ABCFM, see Douglas K. Showalter, *Chapters on the 1806 Haystack Prayer Meeting and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*. (published by the author, 2006).

10. Myron A. Munson, 1637–1887, *The Munson Record: A Genealogical and Biographical Account of Captain Thomas Munson and His Descendants* (New Haven: Printed for the Munson Association, 1895), Vol. II, 648.

11. Rev. William Thompson, *Memoirs of the Rev. Samuel Munson and the Rev. Henry Lyman, Late Missionaries to the Indian Archipelago With the Journal of their Exploring Tour* (New York: D. Appleton & Co.), 1839, 20–21.

12. Thompson, 22.

13. This image is a colored lithograph made by T. Moore's Lithography (Boston, Massachusetts) of a drawing by Esteria Butler of the west view of the campus of Bowdoin College. It is in the public domain. Image courtesy of the Bowdoin College Library, Brunswick, Maine.  
[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:West\\_View\\_of\\_Bowdoin\\_College\\_1830s.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:West_View_of_Bowdoin_College_1830s.jpg)

14. Thompson, 29.

15. Thus far, I have not seen it explicitly stated that Munson's ordination in Orleans took place in the Congregational church there. However, that is virtually certain, given the tradition that Congregational ordinations were held in churches, which continues to be the tradition in Congregational heritage churches in our modern day.

16. FCC2, September 19, 1832 meeting, 177. The record reads as follows:

*Vote of the Church, that Revd B. Woodbury—and as many members as can attend the Conference of Churches in Orleans, 2d tuesday of October to attend.*

It appears that Samuel Munson's ordination took place in conjunction with the Conference meeting that fall, though the ordination itself was the act of an Ecclesiastical Council made up of

Congregational clergy [likely largely from Barnstable County], as was the custom for ordaining councils at that time. It wasn't until 1902 that the Conference [now Barnstable Association] itself began to ordain clergy and have responsibility for their ministerial standing. See Chapter 9 – “Our Barnstable Association of the United Church of Christ” in this book.

It was customary for those early Conference meetings to last more than one day. Apparently, the Conference began on Tuesday, October 9 in Orleans, but the ordination itself was held there the following day, on Wednesday. The date of the ordination as October 10 is given by Rev. John A. Vinton in *Vinton Book Copy*, Volume II, 115. That book is in typewritten form and is held by the Congregational Library in Boston. It contains brief biographies of the missionaries of the ABCFM.

17. Fish, 1.

18. Thompson, 21.

19. Samuel and Abigail married on May 8, 1833.

20. Thompson, 62–63.

21. Thompson, 64–65.

22. Thompson, 66.

23. Thompson, 72.

24. Thompson, 71.

25. Thompson, 72.

26. This image of the City of Batavia from about 1780 is used with permission from the Tropenmuseum of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT).

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:COLLECTIE\\_TROPENMUSEUM\\_De\\_stad\\_Batavia\\_T\\_Mnr\\_3728-537.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:COLLECTIE_TROPENMUSEUM_De_stad_Batavia_T_Mnr_3728-537.jpg)

27. Thompson, 76–77. This letter was sent to the Auxiliary Foreign Missionary Society of Barnstable.

28. Thompson, 81.

29. Munson, 664.

30. Thompson, 94–95.

31. Thompson, 177–178.

32. William E. Strong, *The Story of the American Board: An Account of the First Hundred years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press) 1910), 117.

33. This image of a Batak village was created by artist Johannes Ykema (Uitgever) before 1991. Photo Lith. L. van Leer & Co., Amsterdam. The image is used with permission from the Tropenmuseum of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT).  
[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:COLLECTIE\\_TROPENMUSEUM\\_Schoolplaat\\_van\\_ee\\_n\\_Batak\\_dorp\\_TMnr\\_5426-7.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:COLLECTIE_TROPENMUSEUM_Schoolplaat_van_ee_n_Batak_dorp_TMnr_5426-7.jpg)

34. Strong, 117.

35. Thompson, 195.

36. Thompson, 190– 191.

37. Vinton, 116.

38. Thompson, 187–188.

39. Leonard Woods, *A Sermon Delivered in the Chapel of the Theol. Seminary, Andover, Feb. 1, 1835, on the Death of Henry Lyman & Samuel Munson, Missionaries, and of Aurelian H. Post, Luke Baker & Chester Lord, All Recent Members of the Seminary* (Andover: Bould and Newman), 1835, 31.

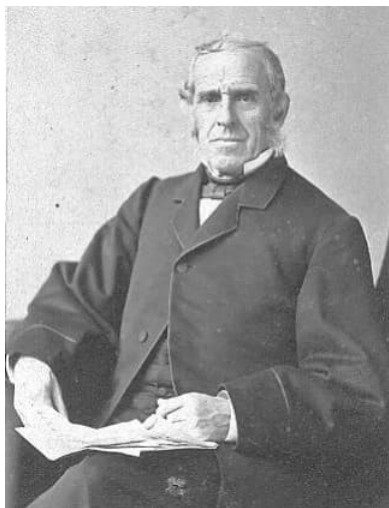
## Chapter 12 – We Remember Rev. Dr. Henry B. Hooker

### A Sermon

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.* [Hebrews 12:1–2 NRSV]

This morning, I invite you to use your imagination. Imagine that it is February 22nd in the year 1837. Imagine that our church is still on the Village Green and that we are attending the installation of a new minister into our church, Rev. Henry Brown Hooker.<sup>1</sup>

Henry Hooker is a native of Vermont. He comes to our small Massachusetts coastal village with his wife Martha, of nearly ten years, and their three young daughters. Henry is only 34 years old. But already, he has accumulated quite a record of Christian service. His record has impressed both our First Congregational Church and our First Congregational Society members. Both groups are now very eager to see Henry and his family settle in Falmouth.



Rev. Dr. Henry B. Hooker

Henry graduated from Andover Theological Seminary, a stronghold of traditional Trinitarian Congregationalism. That seminary came into being following the so-called “loss” of Harvard College to liberal Unitarian Congregationalists in 1805. Through the years, our church’s ministers have come from Harvard. But now, Henry is our church’s third minister not to have studied there. In 1825, following his graduation from Andover, Henry was ordained by Congregationalists in Vermont. He was ordained to serve as an evangelist in the state of South Carolina.

Henry spent a year in that southern state, spreading the good news of Jesus Christ as well as Congregationalism to a congregation located between Charleston and Savannah. That church contained twenty white Christians and three hundred black Christians who were enslaved. Like many Congregational ministers of this time, Henry is no friend of slavery. He cares about the God-given souls and well-being of all kinds of people the world over.

Following that year in the South, Rev. Hooker came to western Massachusetts to serve the Congregational church in Lanesboro. There he remained for 9 years, turning a very weak situation into a flourishing one. During Henry’s ministry there, a new church building was constructed in Lanesboro to replace the old, deteriorating one, which even sheep wandered through. Henry was an effective pastor and teacher for that Lanesboro congregation. He



sponsored numerous revivals and built-up that church's activities and membership.

However, the time came when Henry was offered a very important position. He was asked to become the chief officer of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society. That society gave aid each year to new and struggling Congregational churches across the Commonwealth. Henry was honored to be thought of so highly. But he declined to take that position. Instead, he accepted the offer to become our minister here in Falmouth.

And so it is that we have all gathered together in our church on the Village Green on this cold February day in 1837. We're here to witness Rev. Hooker's installation. As we sit in our church's hard wooden box pews, many of us wear our coats to keep out the drafts. We are thankful that a decade before this, our church was finally outfitted with its first wood stoves. The truth be known, those stoves are fairly ugly. Their long stove pipes and creosote drip pans run over our pews as they make their way up to a chimney on our roof. But at least those stoves keep the chill down. They do that if our sexton remembers to get them going early enough before each service.

Today's installation is a solemn act of divine worship. It's also a festive time. Our church has invited clergy from several of our sister Congregational churches in the area to conduct this installation for us. Lay delegates have likely come from those churches too. We've also invited some of Rev. Hooker's ministerial friends. It's clear that our local clergy strongly approve of our selection of Rev. Hooker.

From the high central pulpit standing before us, prayers are said. A sermon is preached. Charges are given to our new minister and to us, his new congregation, as we begin our journey together. The balcony clock ticks on. We're used to long services.

Whenever the wind picks up outside, we can hear our horses begin to whinny. They are in a stable nearby. And several of us, particularly those near our church's windows, instinctively pull our clothing closer around us.

Over our heads there is an oil lamp chandelier, which sways a bit as the wind buffets our church outside. As that chandelier moves, its pendants scatter small specks of colored light all around the room. Some of those bright specks fall on Henry, as he solemnly kneels before our congregation. He kneels to receive the traditional "laying on of hands" from the clergy installing him.

With the coming of this new minister, our congregation has great hopes. Watching this installation, we are filled with excitement. But perhaps a few of us also wonder, "Will we be disappointed?"

As it turns out, our congregation is far from disappointed. Henry continues to be our minister in Falmouth for many years. And during this time, our congregation greatly benefits from

both his personal talents and his exceptionally strong dedication to ministry. Our people find Henry to be a relatively humble man. He is easy to talk with. Along with his kind manner, his broad face has a friendly smile and a natural openness to it, which many people find appealing.

Some ministers are pushy, ambitious, and seek fame. But not Henry. Some ministers are witty, flashy spectacles in the pulpit. But Henry is not that. Both in and out of the pulpit, he seeks to speak God's truths simply, in a plain and earnest manner. Some ministers are eager to blaze new theological trails. While open-minded, Henry is generally quite content to stick with those "tried and true" doctrines of our faith, which he believes have already served us Reformed Protestants well for many centuries. Rev. Hooker is a very traditional, Calvinistic Congregationalist. He's traditional, even for our time in 1837.

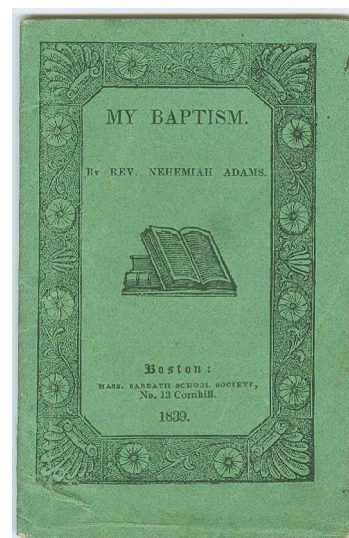
Henry couldn't believe more strongly in the importance of having a conversion experience of God's saving grace. And, to improve the likelihood of that happening to people, Henry leads many revival services. The absolute sovereignty of God, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the salvation of God's elect, and the inherent depravity of all human beings apart from God's saving grace are all key theological points for Henry. Henry also has great enthusiasm for the coming of God's kingdom on earth. When Henry reads out loud the lines of the famous hymn, "Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun," one can well believe that God's long-awaited millennium is just around the corner, ready to appear at any moment! Henry's that convincing!(<sup>2</sup>)

Through the years, our congregation learns that one of Henry's greatest strengths is his prayers. Those prayers reflect both the great depth of his faith and his strong sense of closeness to God. Henry's prayers aren't long. But parishioners hearing them often feel transported to the "heavenly audience-chamber." Remembering the people present, as well as those across our earth, Henry often prays that all people will eventually behold God's everlasting glory.

Oh yes, like most Congregational ministers of this time, Henry believes that for some people there will be eternal punishment. In fact, our church's "Confession of Faith," published in 1851 during Henry's ministry, states the following belief. It declares that:

*there will be ... a day of judgment, when the Lord Jesus Christ will pass sentence upon all mankind, according to the deeds done in the body; and when the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.*<sup>3</sup>

Those are hard words to hear. But with a person like Rev. Hooker to guide us along God's paths, we in our 19<sup>th</sup>-century Falmouth congregation feel relatively secure about our eternal future.



Rev. Hooker signed and gave this book to a child who had been baptized in our church

Everyone knows that Henry has an inherited weakness in his lungs. His twin brother and sister both died of consumption. But Henry fights that weakness off with his frequent exercising in the open air. He also gets up every morning at 4 a.m. and greets each day with singing.

Henry doesn't own a horse. From time to time, he borrows the horses of others. But, much of the time, he simply walks to see his parishioners. He walks to visit them, whether they are out in Teaticket, in Quisset, or even farther away. And he often makes his visits on the worst days weather-wise, so there is a greater likelihood that his parishioners will be home.

When Henry meets people on the road, he often answers their friendly "How do you do?" by cheerfully saying, "As well as any man living, and all the better for seeing you." Henry finds it easy to talk with all kinds of people. He relates very well to their daily work on their farms and boats, as well as in their homes and stores. And very often Henry manages to bring such conversations around to his favorite subjects, namely, the state of their souls and their duty to join our Falmouth church.

Sometimes, when Henry meets children on the road, he quizzes them as to the text of his sermon from the previous Sunday. Sometimes, after "inquiry" meetings that introduce newcomers to our church, Rev. Hooker has even jumped over the backs of our church seats in order to get to those newcomers quickly so he can talk with them.

When visiting the home of a church family, Henry pays particular attention to any member of the family who has not yet been converted. He eagerly talks with such people about the prospects for their soul's salvation. Everyone in Falmouth knows that. Thus, every so often Henry goes to a home and finds one or more rocking chairs empty and rocking. Apparently, the unconverted people in those chairs saw our good minister coming, and they quickly headed off in the opposite direction!

Rev. Hooker is usually very optimistic about people and about life in general. However, that optimism sometimes gets him into trouble, particularly when he goes to a home and cheerfully says to the sick person inside, "How do you do, ma'am? Very well, I see."

Actually, our church has thrived under Rev. Hooker's ministry. To accommodate our bustling activities, we added a two story front addition to our church building. That was in 1839, just two years after Rev. Hooker came here. That addition gave our church an entry room at the front, plus a vestry room upstairs for both meetings and a singing school. Up to that point, our church only had our large meeting room for worship and our three galleries upstairs.

Affording that front addition was quite an undertaking, particularly as only six years before building it, our church stopped receiving support from town tax dollars. But now that church and state are separated, it really is better. For now, we support our own church and society. And we don't have to keep handing our building over to the town for their secular activities.

In 1840, three years after Henry came to Falmouth, we received a clock for the tower of our church. Now, no one can say they didn't know what time it was when they show up late to hear our minister's sermons.

In 1844, our very traditional minister took a deep breath, closed his eyes, and said a prayer for divine guidance as our parishioners installed in our church the very first organ it ever had. We placed that organ in one of our galleries upstairs.<sup>4</sup>

In October 1856, we almost lost our beloved minister. Henry was on a steamboat with 200 other clergy. They were all coming back from a missionary meeting in Newark, New Jersey. On its way to Fall River, the walking beam on the piston of that ship's engine suddenly broke. Weighing several tons, that beam crashed through the decks down to the ship's keel. In the process, it released clouds of super-heated steam. Tragically, one 12-year-old girl was scalded to death, and many other passengers were seriously burned, but Henry survived.<sup>5</sup>

Our parishioners know that Henry is a very strong supporter of taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to unconverted people overseas. Foreign missionary work is one of Henry's greatest passions. Thus, in November of 1856, it was with great fatherly pride that Henry watched his daughter Sarah and her husband, Rev. William Capron, sail out of Hyannis Harbor. Sarah and her husband were headed to Madura, India, to spend much of their lives there as missionaries. Of course, it was Rev. Hooker who gave the prayer for that solemn occasion. Sarah was a skilled medical practitioner, though she had no degree.<sup>6</sup>

If you will, imagine that it is now 1857. Under Henry's guidance, our First Congregational Society did a spectacular thing this year. After years of debate, the society finally moved our church building across the street from the Village Green. With that move, we lifted our church up to create a vestry underneath. We also created a downstairs furnace room, where we could finally hide those stoves and their ugly pipes. We also re-built the church's tower and renovated its main structure, both inside and out. We did that in such a way that our church is now one of the most attractive and useful buildings in our town and region.

Henry and his wife Martha spent last winter in the Barbados. But when they returned this past May, that building project was well underway. Then, on September 16th, we re-dedicated our newly moved and renovated church. No one was surprised when the guest speaker for that event, was Rev. Dr. Joel Hawes from Hartford, Connecticut. No one was surprised, because Dr. Hawes is known to be a strong, Calvinistic Congregational minister, just like our own Rev. Dr. Henry B. Hooker.

Oh yes, Henry is now a Doctor. This past summer, just in time for our dedication, Henry received a Doctor of Divinity degree from Middlebury College, his alma mater.<sup>7</sup>

Almost two months after the re-dedication of our church building, there was great sadness in Falmouth, because on November 17, 1857, Henry announced that he would be leaving our

church.<sup>8</sup> Years before Henry had turned down the Secretary position of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society, but now it had been offered to him again, and he decided to take it.<sup>9</sup>

The truth is that our Falmouth congregation will miss Henry greatly! We will long remember this devout and joyful Christian who ministered to us and our loved ones with such zeal and earnestness!

After Henry resigned, people told the story that, before leaving Falmouth, Henry Hooker saved a few of his sermons. However, he put most of his sermons in a barrel or two, which he burned in his garden. Watching the flames leap up, Henry commented that if those sermons had never given any light before, they would do so now.<sup>10</sup>

I should tell you that the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society was one of the predecessors of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ. Also, that society's position of Secretary, which Henry accepted, was essentially the predecessor of the Conference Minister and President position of that Massachusetts Conference.

Henry served as Secretary of that missionary society from 1858 to 1873. In that capacity, he guided and provided financial aid for new and struggling Congregational churches all across our Commonwealth.<sup>11</sup>

Through the years, Henry was known for writing many religious tracts and newspaper articles. He was a corporate member of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. He was also a member of the Massachusetts Board of Education for many years.

In reading our church's records, one sees that Henry returned to our Falmouth church quite often after he was no longer our church's settled minister. In fact, it seems that Henry attended the installation of almost every new minister who subsequently came to our church. Henry's ties to our church were that close.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July in 1881, Henry Hooker died in Roxbury, Massachusetts.<sup>12</sup> Drifting in and out of consciousness, that beloved minister returned to one of his favorite themes. His final words, spoken quite clearly, were these:

*Display of thy glory! Was I talking about glory? O yes; I remember, it was the glory of the Lord Jesus.*<sup>13</sup>

Henry Hooker was buried in Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Boston. The following words, from the prophet Isaiah [35:10a], were inscribed on his tombstone:

*The redeemed of the LORD shall return and come with singing unto Mt. Zion and everlasting joy shall be upon their head.*

On January 25, 1891, our Falmouth church solemnly dedicated a Sunday school room to honor Dr. Hooker.<sup>14</sup> They also commissioned a Boston painter to make his portrait. And they hung that picture in that Sunday school room, which they now called the “Dr. Henry B. Hooker Memorial Primary Department.”<sup>15</sup>

We remember Rev. Dr. Henry B. Hooker.

## ENDNOTES

1. Key sources used for this sermon were:

A. C. Thompson, *Rev. Henry B. Hooker, D.D.: A Memorial Sketch* (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, Congregational House, 1881).

A. C. Thompson. *Sketches Historical and Biographical of the Eliot Church and Society, Boston*. (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1900).

*The Congregational Year-book*, 1882, 33.

“Oration by General John L. Smith,” *The Celebration of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Town of Falmouth, Massachusetts, June 15, 1886* (1887), 45–46.

Robinson C. Bodfish, *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, June 13, 1903.

Rev. Charles H. Washburn, “Historical Address Covering the 200 Years History of the First Congregational Church in Falmouth, Mass,” *Two Hundredth Anniversary, 1708–1908, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts, October 11, 12, and 13, 1908* (1908), 39–44.

2. This was one of five books of this title that were discovered through Ebay. They had been purchased by a dealer from a dilapidated house in North Anson, Maine. The books were signed by Rev. Hooker and given to children in the family of James and Mary Gifford. As noted in the record of our church’s 1840 annual meeting, “a large number of the baptized children of the church were present and received each a book called ‘My Baptism’ instructing them in their obligations and duties.” *FCC3*, January 1, 1849 meeting, 109. The book pictured here was given to the Gifford’s daughter, Celia Watson Gifford, who had previously been baptized on May 3, 1835. *FCC3*, Baptisms of Rev. Josiah Bent, 46. Four of those books are in our church’s archives now.

3. *Articles of Faith and Covenant of the First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Mass. With a List of the Members* (Boston: Press of T. R. Marvin, 42 Congress Street, 1851), 8.

4. *FCC3*, January 3, 1845 meeting, 115. A report made about the previous year’s activities.

5. *Yarmouth Register*, Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts, Friday, November 7, 1856, Vol. XX, No. 49.

6. *Yarmouth Register*, Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts, Friday, November 28, 1856, Vol. XX, No. 52; *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, April 28, 1900, Vol. VI, No. 4; Robinson C. Bodfish. *The Enterprise*.

7. *Yarmouth Register*, Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts, Friday, August 21, 1857, No. 38.
8. *Yarmouth Register*, Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts, Friday, December 18, 1857, Vol. XXII, No. 3.
9. *Yarmouth Register*, Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts, Friday, November 6, 1857, Vol. XXI, No. 49.
10. Bodfish, *The Enterprise*.
11. *Massachusetts Home Missionary Society 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report*, Annual Meeting, Springfield, MA, June 22, 1881; Rev. Dr. Henry Brown Hooker, "Demands of Home Missions upon Massachusetts Christians," *The Home Missionary*, January 1861, Vol. XXXIII, No. 9, 206–209.
12. *Yarmouth Register*, Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts, Saturday, July 9, 1881, Vol. XLV, No. 28.
13. Thompson. *Rev. Henry B. Hooker, D.D.*, 33–34.
14. *Order of Exercises, Dedication of the Dr. Henry B. Hooker Memorial Primary Department*, January 25, 1891, First Congregational Church in Falmouth. In the possession of the Falmouth Historical Society.
15. *Yarmouth Register*, Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts, Saturday, January 31, 1891, Vol. 55, No. 5. Unfortunately, I have not seen that picture of Rev. Dr. Hooker and do not know if it still exists.

## Chapter 13 – Worship Spaces in Our Congregational Heritage

### Origin of the Puritan Meeting House

Our Falmouth church is an heir of the Reformed Protestant tradition. Our spiritual heritage is traced back to the early Puritans of New England and England and their spiritual forbears, the Swiss Reformers John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli.

Unlike many other Christians, early Protestants in the Reformed tradition did not have a sense of sacred space. They did not consider any inanimate objects to be holy. That was reflected in the “1646 Westminster Confession” of English Puritans, which early New England Congregationalists held in high regard as a statement of the basic Calvinism they shared with English Puritans. As that Confession stated:



“First Meeting House, Boston, Massachusetts”

Artist: Edwin Whitefield, 1889

*Neither prayer nor any other part of religious worship is now under the gospel, either tied unto or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed.<sup>1</sup>*

The Puritans in early America considered any place for worship as good as another in a spiritual sense. They found great sacredness in receiving God’s Word in the human heart through preaching, Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper. But they did not view any building or location where such activities took place as sacred.<sup>(2)</sup>

New England Puritans usually referred to their worship buildings as “meeting houses,” not “churches.” Their use of that term predates their coming to America. It came from the time in England when they were rejected by the Anglican Church, and it became illegal for them to conduct their own worship services.<sup>3</sup> However, they did gather in secret to worship together, using whatever buildings they could find. They met in private homes and other locations with the hope that the authorities would not discover and arrest them. Given their rejection by the established Church of England and those secret gatherings, it was natural for those early English Puritans to refer to their places of worship as “meeting houses.”

In time, the Puritans focused on the theology behind their terminology. When they did that, they came to strongly reject the use of the word “church” for any worship building. That rejection came for two reasons.



First, they came to believe that such usage was not warranted biblically. In the Bible, the Greek word “ecclesia,” from which the English word “church” is translated, is used to designate an assembly or assemblies of Christian worshipers, not any physical structure. Puritans opted to use the word “church” in that same limited way.

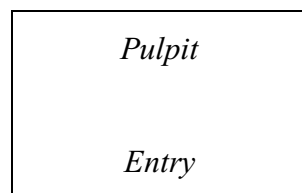
Second, given their Reformed, Calvinistic theology, those Puritans came to believe that calling any building a “church” was theologically misleading. As one nineteenth-century Congregationalist put it, “I deem it an improper use and productive of evil in conveying a false impression of holiness in places.”<sup>4</sup> That concern over conveying a false impression of holiness probably also explains why many early New England meeting houses were not formally dedicated.<sup>5</sup> The term “meeting house” lacks elegance, but the Puritans believed it was the appropriate term for the buildings they worshiped in.

### **Purpose of the Meeting House**

In coming to New England, the Puritans did not have to worry about refurbishing church buildings that already existed. In this new land, they were free to design their worship spaces exactly as they wished, within the limits of the resources they had at hand. Two things were of particular importance to those Puritans.

First, they wanted buildings in which clergy leading worship could be seen and heard by everyone, so all laity could truly participate in that experience. Many European churches had visual and acoustical barriers that prevented such full participation.

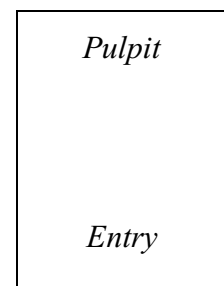
Second, they wanted buildings that would allow congregations to receive the Lord’s Supper while seated together. Initiated by Zwingli, that “community approach” eventually became the traditional Congregational way of receiving this ordinance.<sup>6</sup>



***Meeting House Style***

Early Puritans viewed their meeting houses more as gathering places for the faithful than as temples set apart for God. Reflecting their priorities for public worship, the New England meeting house came to represent a particular style of building layout. Sometimes those meeting houses were square, or nearly so.<sup>7</sup> However, when they were rectangular, their main entry door and their pulpit were across from one another. Each was in the middle of the opposite long walls of the rectangle.

This was quite different from the church layout, which had long been traditional in Europe. In the church style, the main entry and pulpit were across from one another, in the middle of the opposite small walls of the rectangle. The church model was more prone to acoustical problems. For if its long walls were extended too far, people in the back of the room couldn’t hear the spoken and preached Word of God clearly.



***Church Style***

## Physical Structure of the Meeting House



Hingham's Old Ship Meeting House  
1874 *Massachusetts Gazetteer*

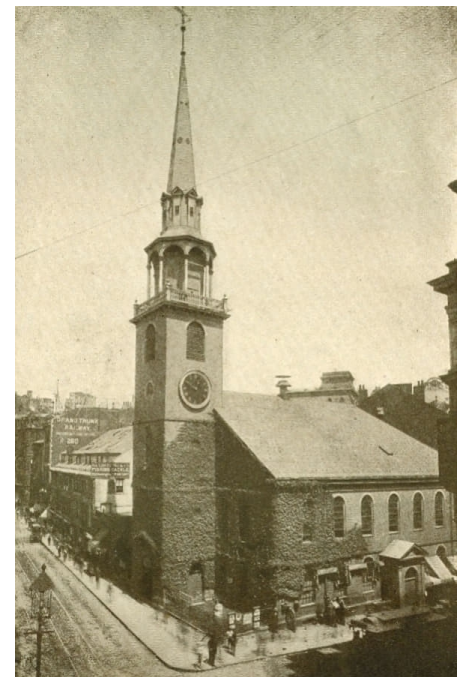
Some of the earliest meeting houses in New England were mud or log huts with thatched roofs.<sup>8</sup> In time, those buildings were shingled or covered with clapboards, and the interiors were finished with plaster or daubed clay.<sup>9</sup> It became common for meeting houses to be painted white inside. Wainscoting and gallery paneling were often painted light gray.

The last remaining example of a 17<sup>th</sup>-century New England meeting house is found in Hingham, Massachusetts. It is the “Old Ship” Meeting House of that town. It is a nearly square structure with a four-sided hip roof that rises to a central cupola.<sup>(10)</sup>

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, meeting houses began to appear like barns. In fact, they were sometimes referred to as the “barn meeting-house.”<sup>11</sup> Pitched roofs and a pair of longer walls on the rectangle became very common. The pulpit was on one of these long walls, and the entry door was across from it on the other long wall.

Examples of this style are the “classic” Old South Meeting House (1729), which still stands in Boston today, and the meeting house of the West Barnstable Congregational Church (restored back to its 1723 appearance) on Route 149 on Cape Cod. Our own Falmouth church was an offshoot of that Barnstable church in 1708. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there was greater interest in ornamentation for pulpits, steeples, and porches.<sup>12 (13)</sup>

Early Congregational meeting houses in New England were usually at the center of life in their communities, both geographically and socially. Those structures were often built on hills. In the early years, that elevated position afforded them some protection from Indian attacks. It also gave them some prominence in their communities.<sup>14</sup> In any case, a primary consideration was that their meeting houses be accessible. Those meeting houses were closely related to their local governments and long supported by town tax dollars—up until 1834 in Massachusetts.



The Old South Church  
Boston, Massachusetts

Over time, as towns sought to replace their old meeting houses with new ones, there was often debate as to where in the community the new one would be located. Ideas of where the town's center should be often played a part in those debates.<sup>15</sup> There was such a division of views in early Falmouth. That led to the formation of a committee of people from outside the town who were authorized to make that decision for the town.

### **Sacred and Secular Uses**

In early New England, townspeople gathered in their Congregational meeting houses for sacred purposes and also for secular ones, such as town meetings, schooling, and even defending themselves against attacking Indians. A number of early meeting houses also doubled as forts. Isaac de Rasieres visited the Pilgrims' meeting house in Plymouth in 1627 and gave this description of it:

*Upon the hill they have a large square house, with a flat roof, made of thick sawn planks, stayed with oak beams, upon the top of which they have six cannons, which shoot iron balls of four and five pounds, and command the surrounding country. The lower part they use for their Church, where they preach on Sundays and the usual holidways.*

Even into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, security from Indian attacks was still an issue for many Congregational worshippers, as noted in this description of the first meeting house of Concord, New Hampshire (1730):

*the people [were] carrying their guns to meeting, and stacking them in the entry under charge of a sentinel, while the best gun in the parish, in the hands of the pastor, Rev. Timothy Walker, went into the pulpit, and leaned there during time of service.<sup>16</sup>*

Early New England towns also used their meeting houses to store their town's gunpowder, particularly when the meeting house was their town's only public building.<sup>17</sup>

### **Simplicity of Style**

Early Congregationalists sought simplicity of style in both their worship and their meeting houses. They rejected various forms of imagery, such as crosses, paintings, sculptures, and mosaics, for fear that such things would distract worshippers from hearing God's Word or even lead to idolatry. They outfitted their meeting houses with clear glass. They repudiated stained glass windows, saying they only provided "dim religious light," a derogatory phrase created by Puritan poet John Milton.<sup>18</sup> The early Congregationalists also rejected chancels.<sup>19</sup>

The overall Puritan tendency was to de-emphasize the mystical aspects of worship. Also, given their negative experiences back in England, they were not inclined to emulate the grandeur of the worship buildings of the Anglican Church they remembered there.<sup>20</sup>

Early Congregationalists were noted for making pulpits the central focus of their worship spaces, instead of altars. Altars have symbolized sacrifice. To emphasize the Protestant belief that the Lord's Supper is not a re-sacrifice of Jesus, New England meeting houses rejected all altars. Instead, they used simple Communion tables for that ordinance. Those tables were sometimes just a hinged board that could be propped into a horizontal shelf. Those boards were usually attached to the base of the deacons' pew facing the congregation, which was at the foot of the pulpit.<sup>21</sup> A simple metal bowl was often used for baptisms.

Over time, New England meeting house pulpits became quite high and often had sounding boards above them.<sup>22</sup> That height allowed the preacher to see and be seen by those who sat in the gallery.<sup>23</sup> It also reflected their sense of God's awesome majesty and the strong emphasis they placed on preaching in worship. The pulpit became the most imposing and most decorated piece of furniture in the meeting house. Some of those large pulpits were in the graceful shape of a wine glass, either against the wall or freestanding. Sounding boards sometimes had a pineapple finial that reached to the ceiling.<sup>24</sup> Pulpits often had a window behind them and a narrow bench behind the pulpit for clergy to sit on.<sup>25</sup>

### Seating in the Meeting House

The earliest meeting houses had simple benches for worshipers. In time, those benches had backs added to them. Seating in those early meeting houses was usually divided by gender. Men sat on one side, and women and girls on the other side. The seats of wives were placed in the same order as their husbands.<sup>26</sup> In women's hairstyling of that time, it was said that one's "meeting house side" was the side of one's head, which could be seen from the benches where the men sat. Young boys sometimes had their own special seating in the meeting house.<sup>27</sup> Sometimes men and women also had separate galleries, each with its own stairway.<sup>28</sup>

By the 1660s, many Massachusetts towns were assigning seats in their meeting houses.<sup>29</sup> Though the criteria for making such assignments might differ from town to town, wealth and age were often taken into consideration. The idea was that the best seats in the meeting house would be assigned to the people who were deemed to have the best standing in the church and community. And one could be fined if one sat in the wrong seat.<sup>30</sup> The process of assigning seats was sometimes called "dignifying the meeting."<sup>31</sup> Those assignments might be revised every few years to take into account people's changing circumstances. This practice accentuated social stratification and often led to controversies. To try to stave off controversy, some towns even went so far as to "dignify the seats." They declared that some seemingly less desirable seats in their meeting house really had just as much dignity as some of the seemingly more desirable seats in it.<sup>32</sup> From his research, Robert Dinkin noted:

*It was not until the period of the Revolution and its aftermath that the majority of towns [in Massachusetts] agreed to abandon the institution [of assigning seating] . . . Many people were no longer willing to accept the status-conscious dictates of seating committees.<sup>33</sup>*

At times, people secured permission to add individual box pews to the meeting houses in addition to the benches. One advantage of those box pews was that male and female members of families were allowed to sit in those pews together during worship, while the worshipers on benches were still divided by gender.<sup>34</sup>

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, box pews became increasingly common in meeting houses, and new meeting houses were often built larger to accommodate them. <sup>(35)</sup> As they moved into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many towns began auctioning box pews off to the highest bidders to support their meeting houses. In Massachusetts, it was common for societies to build a new church, sell their pews at auction, then require an annual pew tax payment from pew owners. Such seems to have been the case in our Falmouth church.<sup>36</sup> In contrast, some New England societies came, over time, to prefer renting their pews. Pew rentals provided a yearly source of income, and it was easier for societies to maintain control of their pews.<sup>37</sup> However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it does not appear that our Falmouth society had many unowned pews available to rent.



Gallery and box pews, Old Ship Meeting House  
Hingham, Massachusetts

Box pews often had seats on three of their four inner sides.<sup>38</sup> Very often, those pews were just oiled, and sometimes they were stained.<sup>39</sup> Some box pews were described as being “made of panel-work, surmounted by a light balustrade of miniature, ornamented columns.”<sup>40</sup> Individuals were allowed to decorate their pews with carpeting of their choice. That gave the meeting house a patchwork quilt appearance when viewed from above.

Before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, those box pew seats were not usually very comfortable. The seat was shallow, and pew backs were straight.<sup>41</sup> Box pews sometimes had free-standing, “high-backed, flag-bottomed chairs” in the center of them for older women in the family.<sup>42</sup>

The seats in those pews were often hinged and hooked in an upright position when parishioners wished to stand to sing hymns or pray, as was the custom then.<sup>43</sup> However, when worship ended, the dropping of these seats caused a terrible clatter that echoed through the meeting house. The following verse was written to commemorate that ear-shattering moment:

*And when at last the loud Amen  
Fell from aloft, how quickly then  
The seats came down with heavy rattle  
Like musketry in fiercest battle.*<sup>44</sup>

Galleries, otherwise known as balconies, were found in many meeting houses. Often, those galleries were reached by stairways at corners of the building or in building additions<sup>45</sup> called “porches.” Those galleries extended from one or more main walls of the meeting house. Usually they were on the three walls not occupied by the pulpit.<sup>46</sup>

Some gallery pews were often reserved for visitors, people of lower social standing, and those who could not afford to purchase or rent their own pew on ground level. When singers participated in worship, they were sometimes given bench seats located in the gallery directly opposite the pulpit.<sup>47</sup> Also, children were sometimes seated on the interior stairways of meeting houses.<sup>48</sup> In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, singers in our Falmouth church were located in the gallery opposite our pulpit.

### **Later Additions to the Meeting House**

Earlier meeting houses were not heated. Worshipers bundled up heavily and brought in their own small foot stoves to stave off New England’s wintry chill as best they could. Box pews helped to reduce floor drafts. Sometimes ice formed in baptismal bowls, which had to be broken before baptisms could proceed. Clergy were sometimes forced to lead services while wearing heavy coats and gloves.<sup>49</sup> It seems that in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, as hellfire became less pronounced in Congregational preaching, steps were finally taken to provide another means of heat for services. Chimneys and stoves, with metal pipes traveling overhead above the pews, were added to many meeting houses then. But those overhead pipes could look very unsightly.

It’s said that towers were first added to meeting houses—attached almost like an exterior chimney—so congregations could summon the faithful to worship with large bells.<sup>50</sup> It’s not surprising that our Falmouth congregation apparently had its first tower or steeple in 1796, at the time its Paul Revere Bell was purchased. In earlier years, drums were often used to call people to worship. Those early towers were often used as an entryway and a staircase to the galleries.<sup>51</sup>

### **The Congregationalists’ Willingness to Change**

Edmund Sinnott, a noted authority on early Congregational worship buildings, observed that New Englanders were continually changing their meeting houses to serve their needs better

and to keep up with changing styles in the meeting houses they saw in other communities. He noted that changes in meeting house styles often spread across New England. Sinnott suggested that Congregationalists may have been more inclined than some other denominations to make such changes because Congregationalists—unlike Episcopalians, for example—did not consider their worship spaces to be sacred.<sup>52</sup>

### **The Transition from Meeting House to Church**

The meeting house model for a worship building was predominant in New England until the onset of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>53</sup> At that time, it began to be quickly superseded by the church model. As Charles Place noted:

*Hardly a meeting house was built after 1800, though a few of those erected earlier added a tower and belfry.*<sup>54</sup>

The 19<sup>th</sup> century brought many changes to New England. Our nation was still very young and eager to be successful. A growing diversity in our society and the emergence of new religious groups brought challenges to Congregationalists. New England experienced increased prosperity and, eventually, the separation of church and state. With that separation, many Congregational churches lost financial support from their towns, but they gained full control of their worship buildings. They were now able to build and use their buildings primarily for religious purposes. In this period, many Congregationalists adopted the traditional church model for worship spaces. Also, many Congregationalists embraced neoclassical architecture, the fashion of that time, which drew its inspiration from ancient Greece and Rome.

As they moved into the 1800s, Congregationalists began to want worship buildings that were beautiful as well as functional for worship. In adopting the church model, pulpits and entryways were placed on opposite small walls of the rectangle. For the first time, chancels were gladly accepted to help provide a focus for worship. Also, instead of being just attached to the outside wall of the worship building, towers were now incorporated into the basic design of churches and often made more elegant.<sup>55</sup>

Writing about those changes in 19th-century Congregationalism, Gretchen Buggeln said:

*By 1800, a considerable variety of religious and civic buildings dotted the landscape . . . These structures shared the many functions originally united in the Puritan meetinghouses. But this was not the end for Congregational visibility, for as the meetinghouse lost its role as symbolic center of community life, a new breed of grand church buildings claimed to be something equally important to the community: the home of a Christian civility based in refined worship, a generous public spirit, good manners, and good taste. Monumental religious buildings impressed nearly all who saw them.*<sup>56</sup>

## ENDNOTES

1. John H. Leith, ed., *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1963), 217.
2. The picture “First Meeting House, Boston, Massachusetts” was published in *Homes of our Forefathers in Boston, Old England, and Boston, New England: From Original Drawings by Edwin Whitefield* (Boston: Damrell & Upham, 1889), 84. It is in the public domain. As the artist said of that picture:  
*This probably represents the first meeting-house built by the early settlers of Boston, as correctly as any other that has been before pictured of it. We know little more than that its walls were built of clay or mud, and that it was covered with a straw roof. It stood opposite to, and very near, where the Old State House now is.*  
[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1stMeetingHouse\\_Boston\\_byEdwinWhitefield\\_1889.png](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1stMeetingHouse_Boston_byEdwinWhitefield_1889.png)
3. Henry Martin Dexter, *Meeting-Houses Considered Historically and Suggestively* (Boston: J. B. Tilton & Co., 1859), 1.
4. Preston Cummings, *A Dictionary of Congregational Usages and Principles* (Boston: S. K. Whipple and Co., 1852), 228.
5. Dexter, 3.
6. As Gretchen Buggeln wrote of the Lord’s Supper in Protestant churches:  
*One of the major aims of the Reformers was to make the sacrament familiar and comfortable so that no mystery of setting or ritual would impede the communicant’s ability to sense the presence of Christ at the table . . . Early Reformed congregations literally sat around a table, as at a meal. As time went on, common practice was for deacons and elders to take communion out to the communicants in the pews.*  
Gretchen Buggeln, *Temples of Grace: The Material Transformation of Connecticut’s Churches, 1790–1840* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2003), 215.
7. As Charles Place noted, “the so-called square meetinghouse, with few exceptions, had one dimension longer than the other.” Charles A. Place, “From Meeting House to Church in New England, I,” *The Meeting House in the First Hundred Years, Old Time New England*, October 1922, 69.
8. Dexter, 3–4.
9. Place, 70.
10. The image of Hingham’s Old Ship Meeting House is from Elias Nason, *A Gazetteer of the State of Massachusetts With Numerous Illustrations on Wood and Steel* (Boston: B.B. Russell, 1874), 261. It is in the public domain.



11. Dexter, 4.

12. Edmund W. Sinnott, *Meetinghouse & Church In Early New England* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1963), 21.

13. The picture of the Old South Church in Boston, Massachusetts, is from Mary Caroline Crawford, *The Romance of Old New England Churches* (Boston: L. C. Page & Co., 1903), 100. It is in the public domain.

14. Sinnott, 9.

15. Sinnott, 9.

16. Dexter, 8.

17. William Bentley, *The Diary of William Bentley, D.D. Pastor of the East Church, Salem, Massachusetts*, Vol. 3 (January, 1803–December, 1810) (Salem, Massachusetts: The Essex Institute, 1911), 445, footnote.

In some meeting houses, the gunpowder was stored in the loft, in the gallery, or even beneath the pulpit. Three barrels of town gunpowder exploded in the loft of a Weymouth, Massachusetts, meeting house in 1751, destroying that building. “Diaries of Rev. William Smith and Dr. Cotton Tufts, 1738–1784,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*. (October, 1908–June, 1909), Vol. XLII., (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1909), 459.

Before 1765, the South Meeting House in Peabody, Massachusetts, stored gunpowder under its pulpit. John Andrew Wells, *The Peabody Story; Events in Peabody’s History, 1626–1972* (Salem, Massachusetts: The Essex Institute, 1973), 210.

18. Sinnott, 11.

19. Sinnott, 9.

20. Dexter, 8.

21. Robert F. Meader, “Colonial Church Architecture in New England,” *Susquehanna University Studies Journal*, March 1949, 67, 69.

22. As Charles Place wrote: “At the first it is doubtful if there was any pulpit, the earliest form being a simple affair on a raised platform; but no example has been found of a pulpit in a New England meeting house till nearly 1750.” Place, 56.

23. Sinnott, 19.

24. Meader, 69.

25. Eva A. Speare, *Colonial Meeting-Houses of New Hampshire: Compared with their Contemporaries in New England* (Published by Eva A. Speare, 1938, revised 1955), 12–16;

Meador, 69.

26. Robert J. Dinkin, "Seating The Meeting House in Early Massachusetts," *New England Quarterly*, 43, 1970, 456.

27. Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education, *Material Suggested for Use in the Schools in Observance of the Tercentenary of Massachusetts Bay Colony and of the General Court and the One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary of the Adoption of the Constitution*, Number 1, Whole Number, 212, 1930, 79.

28. Place, 74.

29. Dinkin, 451.

30. Dinkin, 451–452.

31. Sinnott, 7.

32. As an example of "dignifying the seats," Robert Dinkin wrote of a meeting house seating committee in Marlboro, Massachusetts, which voted that "the front seats in the gallery should be next in dignity to the second seats below, and that the fore seats in the end gallery should be next in dignity to the third seats below."

Dinkin, 459, quoting Charles Hudson, *History of the Town of Marlborough* (Boston, 1862), 112.

33. Dinkin, 462.

34. Dinkin, 456.

35. The image of the box pews of the Old Ship Meeting House in Hingham, Massachusetts, is from a photograph taken on May 23, 1941 by Frank O. Branzetti as part of the Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. It is in the public domain.

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Interior\\_view\\_Old\\_Ship\\_Church.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Interior_view_Old_Ship_Church.jpg)

36. James David Hudnut-Beumler, *In Pursuit Of The Almighty's Dollar: A History Of Money And American Protestantism* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 9.

37. Buggeln, 42– 43, 50–55.

38. Meador, 69.

39. Meador, 69.

40. Dexter, 6.

41. Sinnott, 11.

42. Dexter, 6.

43. Rev. Charles H. Washburn, "Historical Address Covering the 200 Years History of the First Congregational Church in Falmouth, Mass." *Two Hundredth Anniversary, 1708–1908, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts, October 11, 12, and 13, 1908* (1908), 20.

44. Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education, 78.

45. Dexter, 6.

46. Meader, 69.

47. Dexter, 5–6.

48. Dexter, 5.

49. Sinnott, 11.

50. Meader, 70.

51. Meader, 70.

52. Sinnott, 10.

53. Place, 111.

54. Place, 3.

55. Sinnott, 23.

56. Buggeln, 167–168.

## Chapter 14 – Our Congregation’s Three Meeting Houses

### Our Congregation’s First Meeting House: 1700 or Earlier

The first mention of a meeting house in Falmouth town records, which I have found, appears in the minutes for October 15, 1700.<sup>1</sup> There it is said that “Meletia borne and Thomas bowrman were chosen by vote to tacke account Ebenzer Nye and Moses Hatch about the meting house.” On December 26, the town then voted for Thomas bowrman and Philip Dexter to “Repare the towne house.” I think it is likely that the terms “meting house” and “towne house” referred to the same structure. Though not documented, it seems likely this building was in existence prior to 1700.<sup>2</sup>

Little is known about this first meeting house. It was, however, voted at the October 15, 1704, town meeting “that windoe shutes for the 4 Lower windoes of the meting hous should be made.” That suggests this structure had two stories, a lower and upper window on each side, and possibly also a gallery. Probably this was a rustic, nearly square building with a hip roof. That was common for New England meeting houses, particularly in the newer settlements of that early period.<sup>3</sup> It’s possible that putting shutters on their lower windows reflected a concern about their security and/or the security of the building itself and its contents. I will note that the infamous French and Indian War raid on the citizens of Deerfield, on the then western frontier of the Commonwealth, took place on February 29, 1704. In this entire decade, from 1700 to 1710, only eight Congregational churches were formed in the Commonwealth, likely due, in part, to concerns about Indian raids, particularly in western Massachusetts communities.<sup>4</sup>

Our first meeting house likely looked somewhat like the structure below, in which early 17th-century Native Americans in Marshpee are said to have worshiped. Though, in that early period, meeting houses would not have had chimneys, as they were not usually provided with fireplaces or stoves then.<sup>(5)</sup>



View of the Indian Meeting-house at Marshpee.

Our first meeting house was likely located on land beside the Old Burying Ground off today's Mill Road, which was then near the community's center. It was built on the community's Meeting House Lot.<sup>6</sup>



Falmouth's Old Burying Ground

### **Our Congregation's Second Meeting House: 1715–1717**

Our church was gathered on Thursday, October 28, 1708. At that point, it became an independent church fellowship apart from its “parent” church in Barnstable. It wasn't long afterwards that our newly formed congregation and townspeople began to feel that their first meeting house was inadequate. It is worth noting that these early colony communities were usually speculative land ventures, at least in part. That gave them an additional incentive to keep their meeting house up-to-date, in order to better attract new settlers and expand their tax base.

At the March 3, 1713 town meeting, it was voted to put an addition on the meeting house, “to make sd building longer and narrower. If they shall think best so that it do not cover more ground.”

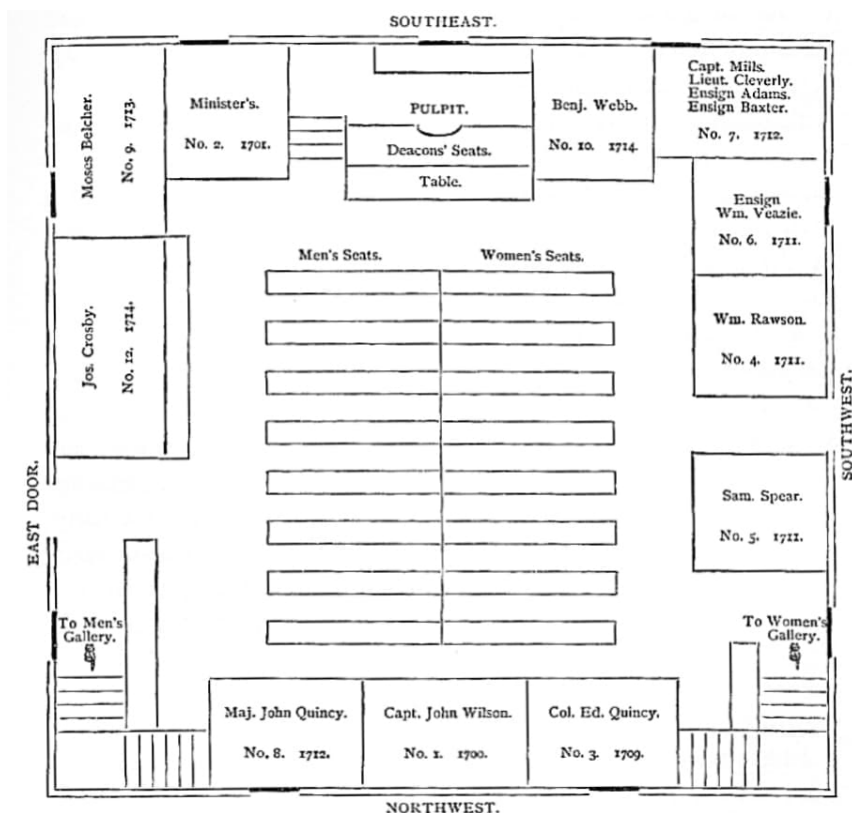
Whether an addition was put on or not, the June 8, 1715, town meeting went a step further. It authorized the building of a new meeting house, “34 foot Long & 30 foot wide & 18 foot between Joins & as flat roof as may be convenient & finish only ye outside walls: ground floor & pulpit as soon as may be conveniently . . .” That new structure was to be paid for by a contribution of 40 pounds from the Province of Massachusetts Bay and money raised through two equal town assessments, one done by the following spring and the other the fall after that.

At the September 29, 1715 town meeting, it was voted that if any meeting house is built new or repaired and enlarged, it should “stand on the same lot ye old one now stands on.” It was also voted once again to build a new meeting house, with the stipulations it be done “forthwith with what covenant speed it can be done” and that “ye dimensions to be 30 feet square or of a like bigness . . . & to be 18 feet stud at least.” It is likely that this new meeting house also had a hip roof.<sup>7</sup>

On July 23, 1717, a committee of two was chosen,

*to continue ye setting ye seats in ye new meeting Hous & determine whether it shall be filled with Seats or to have Spases for pews & if thay leave any spases for pews they shall chalk out ye spots & Let those have them that Bid most for them and if any money be so Raised itt shall be ye towns and be laid out on ye meeting house. And thay shall sell no Spots for pews till thay have given publick notis thereof.*

This meeting house might also have had some box pews in addition to bench seats. And likely, the same committee of two was to carry out the then-traditional, potentially controversial practice of “dignifying the meeting.” Typical of these times, seating in this Falmouth meeting house was likely very stratified socially and economically.<sup>8</sup>



Envisioned seating plan at the Old Stone Meeting House  
in Braintree [Quincy], Massachusetts, in the early 1700s  
*Dates indicate when individual pews were built*

The above sketch from early Braintree [now Quincy] portrays a typical early 18th-century Puritan meeting house seating plan, which likely was similar to the plan in Falmouth’s meeting house in that period.<sup>(9)</sup> Men and women were separated on benches. Individuals had to secure permission to build box pews, which allowed their family members of both genders to sit together.

Braintree records indicate that in 1697 William Rawson was granted the “priviledge of making a seate for his familie, between or upon the two beams over the pulpit, not darkening the pulpit.”<sup>10</sup> After votes in 1709, 1710, and 1711, William Rawson and family were then seated in “a second Pew home to the wall, at the west end of the meeting-house.”<sup>11</sup> That early Braintree meeting house could have been about 36 feet square. It was replaced by a new meeting house in 1732.

At its May 6, 1718 meeting, the town of Falmouth granted Encin Joseph Parker’s request for “the hinder Short seet in our meting house that the women set in att the Northeest Corner below the pulpet.” I wonder if Parker wanted to sit in that position—likely a bench seat—near the pulpit, because of hearing difficulties?

Apparently there was some squabbling over seating, for at the July 28 meeting that same year, two men were chosen “to se that nobody doth disorderly set up or buld anney sets in our meeting house Conterary to the Townes order.”

At the May 14, 1724 town meeting, the town Moderator was given permission to build a small gallery over the front gallery of their new meeting house. Another individual was also allowed to build a small gallery “over the men’s stears in the south wast cornner of the meting house.” That suggests there were separate galleries for men and women, as was common at this time. However, it is not known when those galleries were constructed—at the time the original building was built or some time later. We know this meeting house had glass windows because provision was made at the September 17, 1736 town meeting to repair them.

Apparently, this meeting house had some box pews, if not many of them. However, it is possible that some were added years after the meeting house was built. Rev. Henry Herbert Smythe, early rector of Falmouth’s St. Barnabas church, reported the existence of a November 14, 1737 deed to the pew marked no. 33 on the “lower floor” of this meeting house. It was sold for the sum of thirty-seven dollars to William Swift, Mariner, and his heirs and assigns “forever.” The existence and whereabouts of that deed are not known to me at the time of this writing.

Based on the location of the women’s seating in the northeast corner beneath the pulpit, Smythe drew the conclusion that this meeting house “faced the Woods Hole road; that the pulpit was at the front, i.e., street end of the building, with entrances on either side.”<sup>12</sup> I would note that the common custom of that time was for meeting house entrances to face East or South—not West like the churches in England.<sup>13</sup>

In 1908, at the two hundredth anniversary celebration of our church’s gathering, Rev. Charles Washburn, then a former minister of our church, gave the following imagined description of our church’s second meeting house. Based on his sense of other meeting houses of that period,<sup>14</sup> Washburn said that our meeting house likely had an entry door on each of three sides, one of those doors being in a porch at the front. Likely there was a gallery running along three walls, a semi-circular pulpit with a sounding board above it, and high, square-backed box pews with seats along three of their inner walls. Washburn also suggested that a chair in the center of

each box pew would have been reserved for the eldest female in the family. Also, the deacons' pew would have been immediately before the pulpit.

The accuracy of Washburn's description is not known. Town records give no indication of a porch, but if there was one, it likely would have been on a longer side of this building opposite the pulpit, in traditional "meeting house" style.

It is worth noting that in this same period, in 1717, a new meeting house was built for our sister church in West Barnstable, Massachusetts. Then, in 1723, to accommodate more people, that meeting house was sawed in half and pulled apart to expand it by adding an eighteen-foot section. That same year, a tower, a steeple, and a rooster—a symbol of repentance for Puritans—were added. Years later, other changes were made to it.

But then, as shown in the picture to the right, that meeting house was restored in the 1950s to look much as it did in 1723.<sup>15</sup> It is not known if our church's second meeting house had a tower, but in its restored state, the West Parish Meetinghouse can likely give us a fair idea of what our 1715–1717 meeting house looked like.<sup>(16)</sup>



West Parish Congregational Church  
Meetinghouse, built 1717  
restored to 1723 appearance  
West Barnstable, Massachusetts

### **Our Second Meeting House Altered: 1742**

At the July 1, 1740 town meeting, it was voted that "ye meeting house be kept in repair." The town meeting of June 24, 1742 voted to build a new meeting house. But then, at its meeting on September 13 that same year, the town reversed itself, deciding instead to build new galleries over the old ones and repair its exterior as needed.

### **Our Third Meeting House: 1752**<sup>17</sup>

Apparently, the deficiencies of the old meeting house became more obvious as time passed. At the town meeting of April 23, 1747, it was decided once again to build a new meeting house but also to "mend the old meeting house for the present." Two more 1747 town meetings considered this same issue. The July 24 meeting voted to "Buld the meten house 40 forty feet Square." But then, at the September 24 town meeting, the issue of building a new meeting house was "Pased in the Negatife."

While the need for a new meeting house was being debated, the town, at its October 6, 1749 meeting, created Falmouth's Village Green by setting apart about a one and a half-acre plot



of land from what they then called the "Meeting House lot and training field."<sup>18</sup>

At a Falmouth town meeting on March 11, 1750, it was "voted That the Begness of the New Meeting House That ye Town has agrd to Build Shall be Redused to 42 feet Squar." It was also voted, "That the now Standing Meeting House Shall be used and Emproved bords Bulding the new one."

On August 28, 1750, voters decided to build a new meeting house. They also decided that this new "meeting house should be 45 feet square with 17 spots for Pues below and 12 above. All spots were to be sold to the highest bidder, with no one Man to Bid off more than one pue spot himself." A memory of difficulties with pew purchases in the old meeting house may have given rise to this latter stipulation. In addition, it was voted for "Twenty Thousand Boards" to be purchased for building this meeting house.<sup>19</sup>

It seems that the above two town meeting votes are out of sequence. In the March meeting in 1750, a previous agreement to build a meeting house was revised. In the later August meeting, in 1750, an agreement is reached to build a new meeting house. Nineteenth-century historian Frederick Freeman said that August 28 town meeting actually took place earlier, in the year 1749, though the town record gave it the date 1750. I'm inclined to think Freeman was likely correct in that assertion.

Falmouth town records also show that on December 3, 1750, it was voted that "forty Pounds money" should be raised by taxing the town to pay for the boards for the meeting house.

It's interesting to note that at the above August 28, 1750 [or 1749?] meeting, a vote was also taken as to where the new meeting house should be built. A "Great Majeority" voted that it should be built "In ye same place yt the old one now stands." However, "the Minier part being un Esy the Town agreed" to form a committee to decide that matter.

That committee was made up of people from out of town—two men from Barnstable and a deacon from Sandwich. Later, another deacon was added to that committee. Ultimately, the decision was made to build this new meeting house on the new Village Green. Such debates over meeting house locations were very common in early New England, often because the meeting house usually marked the center of a community, and tax payers supporting it often had definite views as to where that center should be.

This new, third meeting house was finally raised on May 19, 1752, according to David Crowell, an 18th-century selectman of Falmouth who kept a record of dates for noteworthy events.<sup>20</sup> Likely sections of the heavy frame were assembled on the ground. Then a number of men used long poles to lift the frame into position so it could be joined with the building's rafters. Probably this was an exciting day in the life of the town. That meeting house may have looked similar to the old Congregational meeting house in Rockingham, Vermont, shown on the next page.<sup>(21)</sup>

The Falmouth town meeting of June 21, 1756, entered into its record the list of all the pew owners in its new meeting house. That list showed twenty-two numbered pews on the main floor and eleven in the gallery. Pew No. 1 on the main floor was “to be for the Minister for the Time being.” Pew No. 10 in the gallery was owned by “widow Marcy Bourn.” That was the only pew owned by a woman.”

For a list of pew owners in this meeting house, see Appendix VIII – “Pew Charts and Owner Lists: 1756 – Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century” in this book.



Old Meeting House, built 1787  
Rockingham, Vermont

That 1752 meeting house had galleries along three sides. The gallery on the south side was for women, whereas the gallery up front was for the singers. The pulpit was said to have been on the north end of the building, opposite the entrance.<sup>22</sup>

Apparently this building did not have a porch.<sup>23</sup> A whipping post was said to have been on the Village Green at the rear of this building.<sup>24</sup>

## ENDNOTES

1. Rev. Henry Herbert Smythe’s description and analysis of our Falmouth church’s history, created in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has been an invaluable aid to my research. However, in addition to being thankful for all his fine work, I find that I do differ with, or at least question, some of his interpretations of that history. For example, it appears that Smythe was mistaken when he said that “the first recorded mention of a Meeting house is found in the *Proprietor Record*, 22 and 23 of December 1703, when ‘the Proprietors of the land of Suckneset met at the Meeting house.’” I began this chapter by noting an earlier mention of the meeting house, from 1700. Rev. Henry Herbert Smythe, *History of the First Congregational Society of Falmouth*, prepared and compiled from original documents and sources, first printed in *The Falmouth Enterprise*, 1903, 7. Typed copy from 1933 in the Falmouth Public Library. Note that page 6 of the 1933 copy indicates that some of the material in that document was from 1927.

2. In his 1843 lectures, John Jenkins assumed that this first meeting house was built “about the time Mr. Shiverick came among them between the years 1690 and 1700.” John Jenkins, *Three Lectures on the Early History of the Town of Falmouth Covering the Time From Its Settlement to*

1812 (Falmouth, MA: L.F. Clarke, Steam Printer, 1889), 65.

3. Andrew L. Drummond, *The Evolution of the New England Meeting House*, *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, No. S. 353, June 1946, 337–338.

4. Joseph S. Clark, *A Historical Sketch of the Congregational Churches in Massachusetts from 1620–1858 With an Appendix* (Boston: Congregational Board of Publication, 1858), 113. Clark said the following eight Massachusetts churches were gathered in the period between 1700–1710, including our own Falmouth church: Framingham (1701), Boxford (1702), Rochester [now Marion] (1703), Byfield (1706), Braintree (1707), Falmouth (1708), Weston (1709), and Dighton (likely 1710). See Clark, 112–113.

5. The image of the Marshpee [Mashpee, MA] meeting house is from Joseph Tracy. *History of the American Board of Commissioners For Foreign Missions* (Second Edition) (New York: M.W. Dodd, 1842) and earlier from John Warner Barber, *Historical Collections, History and Antiquities of Every Town in Massachusetts With Geographical Descriptions*, Illustrated by 200 Engravings (Worcester, MA: Dorr, Howland & Co., 1839), 48.

6. For more about that lot, see Chapter 15 – “The Meeting House Lot, Village Green, and Parsonage Lands” in this book.

7. Andrew L. Drummond, 337–338. However, as Charles Place noted, “Few hip-roof meeting houses were built after this [1711] period.” Charles Place, “The Meeting House and Church in New England,” I. The Meeting House in the First Hundred Years, *Old Time New England*, October 1922, 76.

8. At that same July 23, 1717 town meeting, a Capt. Lothrop was authorized to buy from another individual “that part of ye new meeting which is above ye dimensions contracted for and to have itt all togather in a particular spot upon ye lower flooor not exceeding ye quantity of four foot & a half Square.” Apparently, the town was permitting Capt. Lothrop to build a box pew in this new meeting house if it was decided there could be pews in it. The following year, 1718, Capt. Lothrop was paid fifteen shillings for sweeping the meeting house for a year.

9. The image of the meeting house floor plan is from *The “Chappel Of Ease” and Church of Statesmen: Commemorative Services at the Completion of Two Hundred and Fifty Years Since the Gathering of the First Church of Christ in Quincy* (Printed for the Society, 1890), 141. It is in the public domain. John Adams, who became our nation’s second president, was baptized in this church in 1735, though by 1732 this congregation was worshipping in a new meeting house. *The “Chappel Of Ease*, 50.”

10. *The “Chappel Of Ease*,” 139.

11. *The “Chappel Of Ease*,” 139.

12. Smythe, 12.

13. Edmund W. Sinnott, *Meetinghouse & Church In Early New England*. (New York: Bonanza Books, 1963), 9.
14. Rev. Charles H. Washburn, "Historical Address Covering the 200 Years History of the First Congregational Church in Falmouth, Mass.," *Two Hundredth Anniversary, 1708–1908, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts, October 11, 12, and 13, 1908* (1908), 20.
15. Sinnott, 41; Walter R. Goehring, *Being an Account of the Gathering of the Church Body in London in 1616 with Henry Jacob and Its Early history in the New World And Particularly of the West Parish Meetinghouse built in 1717 in West Barnstable, Massachusetts* (West Barnstable, Massachusetts: The West Parish Memorial Foundation, 1959), 22–24.
16. This image of the West Parish Congregational Church meeting house in West Barnstable, Massachusetts, is from a photograph taken as part of the Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. It is in the public domain.  
[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:West\\_Parish\\_Congregational\\_Church\\_Barnstable.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:West_Parish_Congregational_Church_Barnstable.jpg)
17. Simeon Deyo gives a description of this 1750 meeting house, which I suspect is likely a description of the church after its 1839 remodeling. That may explain why Geoffrey is puzzled by Deyo's description of the windows of this building. Geoffrey wondered how they could all fit into the 1750 structure. Simeon L. Deyo, ed., *History of Barnstable County, Massachusetts* (New York: H. W. Blake & Co., 1890), 646; Theodate Geoffrey, *Suckanesset Wherein May Be Read A History of Falmouth, Massachusetts* (The Falmouth Publishing Co., 1930), 46.
18. Deyo, 658; Theodate Geoffrey, *Suckanesset: Wherein May Be Read, A History of Falmouth, Massachusetts* (Falmouth, MA: The Falmouth Publishing Co., Inc., 1930), 42–43. Also, for more information on the Village Green, see Chapter 15 – "The Meeting House Lot, Village Green, and Parsonage Lands" in this book.
19. Frederick Freeman, *The History of Cape Cod: The Annals of The Thirteen Towns of Barnstable County* (Boston: Printed for the Author, 1862), Vol. II, 447.
20. David Crowell. "A Record of Some Things Worth Taking Notice Of." Manuscript in the Crowell Family Collection at the Falmouth Historical Society. David Crowell was said to have been born in 1720 and died in 1810.
21. This image of the Rockingham Meeting House in Rockingham, Vermont, is from a photograph taken by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, as part of the Historic American Buildings Survey, Survey number HABS VT-0004. It is in the public domain.  
[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rockingham\\_Meeting\\_House.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rockingham_Meeting_House.jpg)
22. Rev. Henry Herbert Smythe. Newspaper article in the *Smythe Collection*, Box 2, Folder 6, Item 5 through 6 at the Falmouth Historical Society.

23. This is inferred from the fact that the Congregational Society in Falmouth voted on July 5, 1792, to enlarge the meeting house by 14 feet and to build a porch on it. However, it does not appear that those alterations were made, because at a subsequent society meeting on May 12, 1794, the society voted to “reconsider all former votes respecting the meeting house . . . ” Instead of altering the old meeting house, consideration was now being given to the possibility of building a new one. Freeman, 463; Smythe, 30.

24. Geoffrey, 56.

## **Chapter 15 – The Meeting House Lot, Village Green, and Parsonage Lands**

Typically, when early Massachusetts towns were laid out, three lots of land were set apart, namely, for the town's meeting house, first settled minister, and schools. Those lots could be large, just as the boundaries of the early towns were large. Later, town boundary lines "were restricted to being no more than eight miles from the meeting-house."<sup>1</sup>

The settlement of towns was then legally authorized, with the expectation that those granted that authorization would expand their new community and secure suitable religious leadership for it. An example of that is seen in the following description of the settlement of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, as a town in 1717:

*On the petition of John Bingham and thirty others, the General Court, in the year 1717, appoint a committee with power to grant and lay out the whole of the lands of the township to such persons 'as the committee, in their wisdom, think most likely to advance the settlement of the place, provided the committee, within three years, have there at least forty families, with an Orthodox minister.'*

*Also provided a lot as large as may be convenient, in their judgment, be laid out to the 'first settled minister;' also a lot 'for the ministry, and another for the use of schools.' With modifications, this was the provident, careful method of founding towns very early adopted.<sup>2</sup>*

*On these fifteen acres, called the meetinghouse lot, which was always 'open, unfenced, intersected by ways leading to the burial ground, and two highways, 'Shrewsbury meeting-house stood until 1766, when it was voted to rebuild it, and 'look up the bounds of the meeting-house lot to see how much it was proper to sell.' While Shrewsbury town and parish were all one, the town could make the appropriation of such surplus land from parish to municipal purposes. The appropriation, however, once fairly made to parochial purposes is in the nature of a grant, which cannot be revoked when town and parish become separate.<sup>3</sup>*

### **Falmouth's Meeting House Lot**

It is not known when Falmouth's Meeting House Lot was first set apart, though it seems reasonable that it was set apart prior to the construction of the town's first meeting house on it—presumably 1700 or earlier. At the time Sucknesset was incorporated in 1686—somewhat later the town became known as Falmouth<sup>4</sup>—Plymouth Colony law required that there be such a structure in its towns specifically for the worship of God. As that law stated:

*It is Enacted by the Court, That there be a publick House Erected in every Town of this Government, for the Town comfortably to meet in, to Worship God; and in case any*

*Town shall Apparently neglect or refuse to Build the said House, it shall be in the power of the Governour and Magistrates, or County Courts, to Appoint and Authorize a Person or Persons to Build the said House according to the Ability and Necessity of the People, and the Charge thereof to be defrayed by all the Inhabitants and Proprietors of the Town.*<sup>5</sup>



Falmouth's Old Burying Ground

Our congregation's first meeting house was likely located on land beside the Old Burying Ground off today's Mill Road, which was then near the community's center. In the early 1900s, Rev. Henry Herbert Smythe concluded that this building on the town's Meeting House Lot was likely situated between that cemetery and the Woods Hole Road.<sup>6</sup> Smythe noted that, as of 1903, the earliest death date on any stone in that burial ground was March 28, 1705.<sup>7</sup>

Our congregation's second meeting house was built on that lot in 1715–1717. The Proprietors of the town adopted this resolution at their May 27, 1718 meeting:

*that the lot called the Burying place lot, and that called the Meeting House lot is for the Meeting House to stand on, and for a training field, and for any other common use or uses as the major part of the Proprietors shall hereafter see cause to put them to or any part of them.*<sup>8</sup>

On February 10, 1747, the Proprietors of Falmouth met in the second meeting house and voted “to sell the 4 acre lot about the Meeting house, except one acre and a half exclusive of the way.”<sup>9</sup>

Rev. Smythe interpreted that vote to mean that the Proprietors authorized the sale of the land on which that second meeting house stood, which, in turn, strengthened the position of those who were in favor of the town building a new meeting house.<sup>10</sup> I suppose that is a possible interpretation. However, unless further evidence emerges, I am more inclined to see the 1747 Proprietors' vote as authorizing the sale of about a two and a half acre portion of the Meeting House Lot, which did not include the land upon which the meeting house then stood.<sup>11</sup>

I find Smythe's interpretation difficult to accept for at least two reasons. First, the town was still continuing to use that second meeting house. And, second, at a Falmouth town meeting on August 28, 1750, the majority voted to have a new meeting house built on the spot of their current one.<sup>12</sup> It seems unlikely that a majority of people would have voted that way at that meeting if that land was up for sale or had already been sold by the Proprietors and was not



available for the town's use.

As Massachusetts towns grew, there was a tendency for them to sell portions of their Meeting House Lot land that were no longer considered important to own. Noting that tendency, Massachusetts attorney Edward Buck wrote the following in 1866:

*If the old towns had been less in the habit of 'looking up the bounds of the meeting-house lot to see what was proper to sell,' the allowance of public grounds in the heart of Massachusetts towns would be more ample in our day. As it is, we owe to the 'meeting-house lot' nearly all we have of common, green, public square, training field and muster-field in the various towns of the Commonwealth . . .*<sup>13</sup>

### Falmouth's Village Green: 1749

At a meeting on October 6, 1749, the Proprietors of the old purchase agreed that,

*thear Should be part of that Lot of Land called ye meating houes Lot to be Laied for a meeting house lot, and training field about one accer and half besides ye road that Leads to Woodishol and is bounded Sourley by Sam el Shiverick ad Westerly by Sillaes Hatch and Northerly by Nathaniel Nickerson and Eastly by Paul Hatch and Sam el Shiverick to Ly per petuebly and for ever to that end: as fence now stands except before Pal Hatch houes—ad ordered to be recorded.*<sup>14</sup>



Falmouth's Village Green seen from the west

That acre and a half became Falmouth's Village Green. The wording of that 1749 vote suggests two things to me. First, it suggests that at that point there was still more to that Meeting House Lot than just that acre and a half portion then being set off for the meeting house and training field. Second, it suggests to me—as it did to 19<sup>th</sup>-century historian Simeon Deyo—that the land then being set off was actually the northernmost portion of the original meeting house lot referred to in the Proprietors' May 27, 1718 vote. As Deyo wrote:

*The present green, so beautiful in its triangular bounds, was laid out October 6, 1749 . . . The present common was taken from the north side of this meeting house lot and training ground that had been laid out in common use to all; and the past pages will show that, including the original town house for a meeting house, the present Congregational church is the fourth place of worship on those grounds. The proprietors reserved the*



*present square as part of the old one, when, on October 6, 1749, they agreed that there should be part of that lot of land called the meeting house lot & training field . . .*<sup>15</sup>

The difference this 1749 vote made was that now, unlike other portions of the original meeting house lot that had been sold or potentially could be sold, this particular portion of that original lot was “for ever” to be preserved for use as a meeting house and training field.

It has sometimes been said that the land for Falmouth’s Village Green was originally given to the town by Deacon Moses Hatch. I have found no evidence of that in either the early Proprietor records or the early Falmouth town records. Nor have I found that stated in either Frederick Freeman’s or Simeon Deyo’s major 19<sup>th</sup>-century histories of Falmouth.<sup>16</sup>

Our congregation’s third meeting house was raised on the Village Green on May 19, 1752.<sup>17</sup>

In about 1777, the First Congregational Society of Falmouth was formed.<sup>18</sup> That society took over from the town of Falmouth the legal responsibility for the buildings our congregation worshiped in. Although that society supported the ministry of our church in various ways over many years, it was distinct from our church. And, likely, some members of that society were not members of our church.

The First Congregational Society of Falmouth oversaw the creation of our congregation’s first church style building for worship—built on the Village Green in 1796—as distinguished from its three former meeting house style buildings.<sup>19</sup>

A Commonwealth-wide vote on November 11, 1833, changed the law in Massachusetts, such that parishes and religious societies in Massachusetts, like the First Congregational Society of Falmouth, could, beginning in February of 1834, no longer receive town tax dollars to support their church building or their minister. With that legal change separating church and state, the secular and sacred uses of our church building were no longer just co-mingled.

In fact, as the records of the society show, in 1836, the town had to pay a rental fee to the society for using our church building on the Village Green.<sup>20</sup> In 1839, the society voted that, beginning in 1840, the town could not use the meeting house for its meetings.<sup>21</sup>

### **A Question About the Village Green**

Here’s a question. After the separation of church and state was voted in 1833, who had ownership of the Village Green land upon which the 1796 church building of our First Congregational Society sat? Was it the town or the religious society that oversaw and owned that building? Edward Buck spoke to that type of issue in his 1866 book entitled “Massachusetts Ecclesiastical Law.” In the following quote, Buck spoke of “the parish,” but he could just as well have used the term “religious society”—like our First Congregational Society. Both parishes and

religious societies were then treated the same under Massachusetts law.<sup>22</sup> Speaking of such law suits over land ownership in the Commonwealth up to his time, Buck noted:

*[they] are decided upon general principles as follows. To wit: that the common, from its nature and general uses, is town property, but the parish has rights of convenient access to the meeting-house, burial-grounds, and horse-sheds, over the common; that the parish has an absolute right to the land on which the meeting-house stands, and the land reasonably appurtenant thereto; that in general the parish is a public corporation quite as old, as valuable, and as tenacious of life, as the town itself; that it is not to be deprived of its lawful property once acquired, by any use which it may permit the town, or an individual claiming under the town, to enjoy, for a series of years . . .*<sup>23</sup>



Our church moved across the road  
from the Village Green  
*Courtesy of Falmouth Historical Society*

On April 4, 1857, the First Congregational Society of Falmouth voted to move our church off the Village Green “to the lot north of the green, upon the conditions expressed in the last article of the warrant.” That is the lot where our church continues to stand.<sup>24</sup> It is to be noted that this was a vote of the society, not the town. The town itself had not owned any ecclesiastical building on the Village Green, since the First Congregational Society was formed, about 1777.

The article in the legal warrant of March 28, 1857, which called for that April 4 meeting and society vote, just noted, was as follows:

*11<sup>th</sup> To see if the society will consent to have their meeting house removed from its present location and placed on the lot of Baalis B. Shiverick’s provided a deed of the land is given to the society, and the house removed without expense to the society.*<sup>25</sup>

One wonders what house is being spoken of there. Is that a reference to the meeting house or to a house that may have then been on the Shiverick property? Could it have been a reference to the meeting house? Also, one wonders: if the society was not willing to pay to have that house moved—whichever house it was—then who was?

I have checked the annual meeting records of the town of Falmouth from 1855–1859 at the Falmouth Town Clerk’s Office.<sup>26</sup> Those records do deal with raising funds for various town projects, including building, widening, and repairing town roads and supporting the town’s

schools and poor. There was even a town vote in that period to fund a chandelier for the Town House.<sup>27</sup> Yet, nowhere in those records do I see any indication that the town of Falmouth paid the First Congregational Society any money. Nor did I find that society, our church, or our church's move off the Village Green even mentioned in the records of those town meetings.

A "Yarmouth Register" submission from that time, shown on the right, indicates that the project of removing the church from the Village Green and remodeling it cost more than \$12,000, of which the society paid almost \$9,000. The remainder, which likely included the moving expenses the society was not willing to pay, was funded by individuals.<sup>(28)</sup>

It is clear from the society's records that in 1856, the society wanted many repairs and remodeling of their Village Green church. For example, they desired to create a vestry beneath the church, and they wanted to put a furnace beneath it. Likely, the latter was to replace stoves and their unsightly pipes, which likely hung above the pews to keep parishioners warm. That was a typical arrangement in that era. At that time, the society was open to the possibility of raising their church from its foundation, if deemed advisable, to accomplish such goals. However, the records for that year show no proposal to move the church from its location.<sup>29</sup>

It is not clear from the society's records in 1856 and 1857 exactly why the society voted to move their church from the Village Green in addition to rebuilding it.

It is worth noting that after our church was moved off the Green, the society at its April 12, 1858 meeting adopted the following resolution:

*That the Society give its permission to any association of individuals to clear off and grade the 'meeting house green' so called, to set out trees to make paths or walks on the same . . .*<sup>30</sup>

In other words, even though our church was now off the Village Green, the society acted as though it still had authority over that land.

In 1903, Rev. Henry Herbert Smyth wrote about the status of the Village Green after our church was moved off it. As Smythe said:

*As one follows the changes which passed over the 'Meeting house lot' and the present green, the question of ownership of this interesting bit of ground inevitably arises. It was*

Correspondence of the Register.

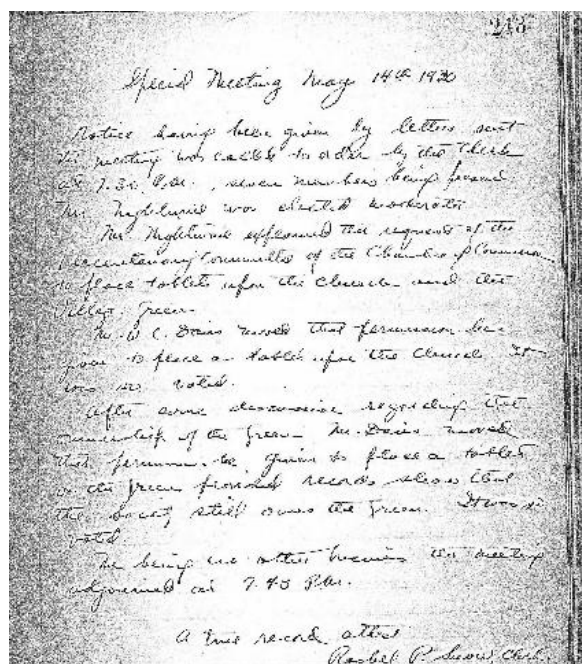
FALMOUTH, May 27, 1857.

That you may know how the Spring goes with us here, in this usually quiet village, I send you a brief note.

Our people are now interested in the remodeling of the old Congregational meeting house, which has been removed from the "Green," its former site, to a side lot. This has been done by individuals, at an expense of more than \$1200,—the society having agreed to pay a little less than \$9000, for a thorough remodel. Mr. Zenas Chadwick of New Bedford, has the contract. The union of feeling and interest in this enterprise among our people is very encouraging.

Yarmouth Register, June 5, 1857

*laid out by the Proprietors as a 'meeting house lot and training ground.' The Society occupied it as such from the time of its laying out in 1749 until 1857. No transfer to the town appears in any of the records, and no deeds passed. Indeed, the town as distinct from the Proprietors does not appear anywhere in connection with it. It would appear that some interesting question as to ownership might be raised if one were so minded.<sup>31</sup>*



First Congregational Society 1930 meeting

Years later, the subject of the ownership of the Village Green came up in the minutes of the First Congregational Society of Falmouth. At their meeting on May 14, 1930, society members discussed a request they had received from the Tercentennial Committee of the Chamber of Commerce in Falmouth. According to our church's minister then, Rev. Leonard Nightwine, the Tercentennial Committee sought the society's permission to place historical plaques on both our church and the Village Green. As that society record indicates:

*Mr. W. C. Davis moved that permission be granted to place a tablet upon the church. It was so voted. After some discussion regarding the ownership of the green Mr. Davis moved that permission be given to place a tablet on the green provided records show that the Society still owns the Green. It was so voted.<sup>32</sup>*

Those historical plaques from 1930 are still on our church and on the Village Green.



1930 commemorative plaque on our church



On January 14, 1936, our church voted to incorporate, with the name of the new corporation being the “First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts.” That same night, the First Congregational Society met and voted to join that new corporation, thus merging with our church. With the creation of that new corporation, all society members automatically became Associate Members of the incorporated church, and all the real and personal property owned by the society was conveyed to the new corporation.<sup>33</sup>

## The Parsonage Lands

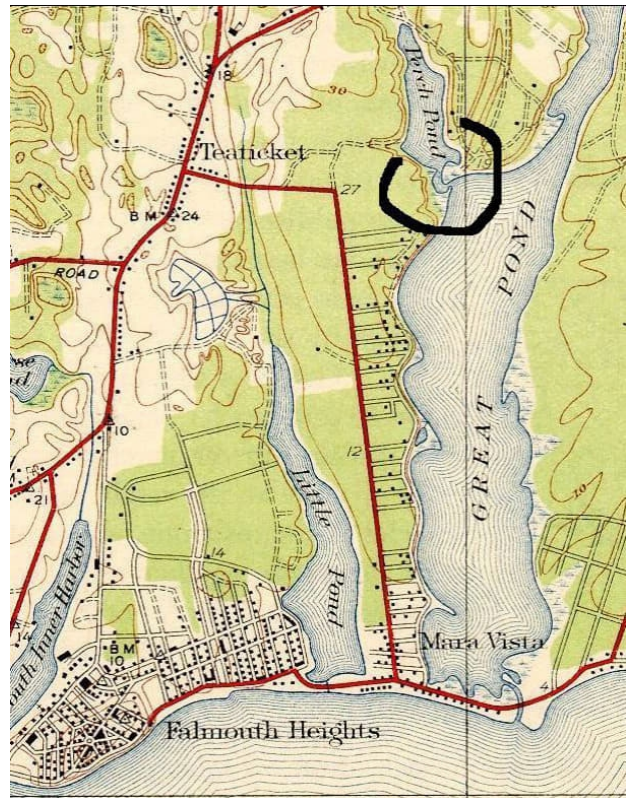
In keeping with the custom of the time, the earliest purchasers of Sucknesset land set aside a 20-acre vacant lot, which was to be used to help secure a settled minister for the community.<sup>34</sup> Presumably, this land was distinct from the town’s so-called Meeting House Lot. Over time, and similar to other Massachusetts communities, that set apart land for a minister came to be known as the Parsonage Land, Minister’s Lot, or Minister’s Wood Lot.

On July 23, 1677, Sucknesset’s Proprietors agreed to give to Jonathan Dunham, our community’s first minister, and all his heirs forever, the following:

*ten acres of upland all ye Skirts of marsh and meadow about ye Bass pond and ye norwest side of Quanamut neck that is not laid out in lots . . .*<sup>35</sup>

A 1996 archaeological reconnaissance survey of Falmouth suggested that Quanamett Neck was “probably the neck of land bordered by Perch Pond and Great Pond near Teaticket in the Coonamessett River.”<sup>36</sup> Note the circled area in the U. S. Geological Survey map to the right which may have been Quanamett Neck.<sup>(37)</sup>

On July 7, 1681, the General Court of Plymouth ordered the people of Sucknesset to set aside about 30 acres of upland and proportionable meadow to encourage the settlement of a minister.<sup>38</sup> Jonathan Dunham left Sucknesset about 1684, at which point Sucknesset authorities bought back all his land and rights. Shortly thereafter, on June 4, 1686, Sucknesset was finally incorporated as a town in Plymouth Colony.<sup>39</sup>



17<sup>th</sup>-century Quanamett Neck?

Historian H. Roger King indicated that in early Falmouth, the setting aside of land for a minister even predated the creation of the town. As King wrote:

*In 1679 Saconesett attempted to meet the ministerial question by setting aside thirty acres of upland and a proportional amount of meadow for the support of a minister.<sup>40</sup> Eight years later it added twenty more by exchange with Jonathan Dunham. Satisfied that Saconesett was serious about obtaining a minister, the General Court incorporated it as a town, the first one created directly out of the expansion of Cape Codders themselves.<sup>41</sup>*

On June 6, 1687, Sucknesset residents voted that a certain section of land, including that purchased from Dunham, shall be and remain to be forever for a person who is employed to teach the word of God among them. That section of land was described as follows:

*Forty acres of upland in ye Twenty-acre Lots and half a share of marsh meadows lying at Great Sepewissett and a dwelling house & about two acres of upland adjoyning to it, with all ye Skirts of marsh or meadow ground about ye Bass Pond, or on Quanamut neck that was not divided to mens lots.<sup>42</sup>*

On January 29, 1706/7, the town authorized an individual to search the Records of Land within Falmouth,

*to see if the Land and medow that is comonly called ye parsonage is so stated and settled that no incumberance may come upon ye same by any of ye proprietors claiming of sd Land & medow so as to prejudice or hinder ye propigating of ye settling of ye Gospel among us.<sup>43</sup>*

Subsequently, at a meeting of the Old Proprietors within Falmouth on February 27, 1706, the lands set apart forever for a minister were described this way:

*40 acres within & adjacent to the twenty acre Lots so called be it more or less, and half a lott of meadow att great Sepiaissett so called, and all ye meadow that lyes on both sides of Nanatuckett River not formerly layd out to any perticuler psons, and all ye meadow att or about Bass pond not formerly Granted to any perticuler psons . . . and also the one half of ye fourth Lott called ye hill Lott . . .<sup>44</sup>*

On May 19, 1707, Rev. Joseph Metcalf was chosen by the town of Falmouth to be its minister.<sup>45</sup> In a letter from the town, sent to Rev. Metcalf and dated August 22, 1707, one of the terms of his settlement in Falmouth was this:

*In case of your removal by deth within ye space of ten years from ye time of your first coming to us viz Decemr ye 25<sup>th</sup> one thousand seven hundred and six you do oblige your Heirs Executors or administrators to make a firm conveyance by deed unto yet Town of ye fifty acre Lott you are settling upon with all the buildings that you shall Erect upon ye*

*same, & to Give or allow to ye Town sixty pounds in ye price of ye Land as itt shall then be valued att by indiferent men upon ye Towns paying to such heirs executors or administrators the Remaindr of ye price of sd Land, together with such a summ of money as you shall have expended In building there upon According to ye account which your self shall keep thereof, and that when soever this Lott & buildings be to be sold the Towne may have ye first refusal.*<sup>46</sup>

Our church was gathered as an independent body on Sunday, October 28, 1708.<sup>47</sup> Rev. Joseph Metcalf served our church from its beginning until 1723. Thus, he passed the ten year mark noted in the above letter.

Rev. Josiah Marshall served our town and church from 1724 to 1730. At a town meeting on November 3, 1730, it was voted to pay 545 pounds to certain agents of the town for their expenses and their cost in purchasing Mr. Marshall's house and land after he left Falmouth.<sup>48</sup>

At a town meeting on March 7, 1743/4:

*Thomas Shiverick was Chosen agent to Run the Line or Range between the Land Called the ye Ministers wood Land or town Lot & the Land of Moses Hatch junr that is to join with him or others Therein, and voted that Capt. Shiverick take Care of Said ministers Land or Town Lot in the hills and prevent any persons from Cutting & Destroying the wood & fencing Stuff.*<sup>49</sup>

Again, at the September 28, 1744 town meeting, Capt. Thos Shiverick "sarves as an agint to take Care of the ministers wood."<sup>50</sup>

At a town meeting on July 17, 1775, the town of Falmouth concurred with the vote of the church that Rev. Zebulon Butler be their minister and pastor, respectively. As part of the arrangement and to "afford further encouragement," Butler was to "improve the parsnige lands Towns Lot and meadows."<sup>51</sup>

The town meeting on August 18, 1778, "chose Majr Jor Dimmuck to sell the personage meadow for the present year att publick vendue & chose majer Swift to take care of the personage Land and Wood Lot and see that no Way is made thereon."

At a First Congregational Society meeting held on October 25, 1779, the society concurred with the church in calling Rev. Isaiah Mann to be the minister of the town and pastor of the church. One of the terms the society offered Mann was "the improvement of all the Lands & meadows and wood Lot belong to the ministry and which [has usually?] ben improved by our former ministers."<sup>52</sup> In this period in Massachusetts, when town tax dollars were used to pay a Congregational church's minister, that individual was often considered the minister of the town and the pastor of that town's church.

The society voted in March 1804, to raise sixty dollars to repair the parsonage fence.<sup>53</sup> On June 4, 1807, the society voted to allow “the Commonwealth of 2 Rods of Land lying in the personage for the purpose of building a gun house to Eight Rods in front and nine in the rear.”<sup>54</sup>

On December 29, 1823, the society unanimously voted to petition the State Legislature for liberty to sell the parsonage property belonging to said society and to invest the proceeds of the same in a permanent fund for the support of the Gospel.<sup>55</sup> Subsequently, on February 7, 1824, the General Court of Massachusetts authorized the First Congregational Society in Falmouth to sell all its ministerial or parsonage lands, with the proceeds from those sales to be invested in a fund and the income received from that fund to be “appropriated towards the support of the gospel ministry in said society.”<sup>56</sup>

The money from those land sales apparently was invested, and proceeds from that investment appeared in the yearly budget of the First Congregational Society as income from the “Parish Fund.”<sup>57</sup> Later, the society appears to have called it the Parsonage Fund.<sup>58</sup>

As Rev. Charles Washburn noted in 1908, the land owned by the society in 1824 “comprised most of the territory between Shore street and Falmouth Heights.”<sup>59</sup>

On March 28, 1874, the General Court of Massachusetts amended its 1824 Act to,

*appropriate any part of the proceeds arising from the sale of said lands to the building or purchase, and maintenance of a parsonage to be kept for the use of the minister of said society.*<sup>60</sup>



First Congregational Church  
parsonage about 1875

Using proceeds from the Parsonage Fund with court approval and other money specifically raised for the purpose, in 1875 the First Congregational Society purchased the land and built a parsonage at 143 Palmer Avenue for its minister, Rev. Henry Craig, and his family, at a cost of \$4,000.<sup>61</sup> Rev. and Mrs. Henry Craig and their daughter Eliza, in the carriage, are shown in the picture on the left.

In 1962, the Chute house at 54 Main Street was purchased for \$45,000, and it began to be used for church functions.<sup>62</sup> That house with its classic widow’s walk was built in 1814 by Captain William Bodfish.

In 1968, our church voted unanimously to turn that house into a residence called the “Manse,” for the church’s minister and family to live in, which it continues to be today.<sup>63</sup> The house was subsequently placed on the National Historic Register.





The Manse



Built by Capt. William Bodfish

In 1968, our church completed the sale of its parsonage at 143 Palmer Avenue for \$26,250. It was eventually demolished, and a new building was built there.<sup>64</sup>

## ENDNOTES

1. Edward Buck, *Massachusetts Ecclesiastical Law* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1866), 150, footnote no. 2.
2. Buck, 149–150.
3. Buck, 151.
4. *Ply. Col. Recs.*, 6:189. By 1694, the Massachusetts General Court had assigned the name Falmouth to Saconesett. *Mass. Prov. Recs.*, 1:178.
5. *The Laws of the Pilgrims: A Fascimile Edition of The Book of the General Laws of the Inhabitants of the Jurisdiction of New-Plimouth, 1672 & 1685* (London: George Prior Publishers), 1977, [1685, Chapter XII, Meeting-Houses], 50.
6. Rev. Henry Herbert Smythe. *History of the First Congregational Society of Falmouth*, 1933, in possession of the Falmouth Public Library. [Prepared and compiled from original documents and sources by the Reverend Henry Herbert Smythe, and first printed in *The Falmouth Enterprise*, 1903.] 6. Note, however, that page 6 indicates that some of the material in this document was from 1927.
7. Smythe, 2.
8. *Proprietor Record 1661–1805, Town of Falmouth*, 62.

9. *Proprietor Record 1661–1805*, 2.

10. Smythe stated his view that the four acres mentioned in that record consisted, *of that which is now (1927) three pieces of land. The main piece is that owned by Mr. E. E. C. Swift, Jr., and occupied by him in part for a residence. Another portion of the four acres lies in what is now the burying ground itself, and extends from the line of graves to the stone wall separating the lot from the land of Mr. E. E. C. Swift. The third portion is, in part, the triangle where the monument of the sailors now stands, and which with the road to the left of it was originally included in the Meeting House lot, as the road was originally to the right of this triangle as one goes to Woods Hole, and Mill road, so-called, was not opened until with the memory of many now living.*  
Smythe, 4–5, 16–17.

11. Edward Buck, *Massachusetts Ecclesiastical Law* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1866), 149–150.

12. *Falmouth Town Records*, Vol. 1, 1668–1757, Town Meetings and Vitals, Town of Falmouth. It is possible that the meeting date was actually August 28, 1749. See the discussion on that in Chapter 14 – “Our Congregation’s Three Meeting Houses,” in section “Our Third Meeting House: 1752” in this book.

13. Buck, 151.

14. *Proprietor Record, 1661–1805* [38 original, 59 transcription]. The later transcription made of the Proprietor Record, now located at the Falmouth Town Office, at first refers to the land as the “Meeting House lot and training field,” but the original Proprietor Record clearly refers to it as the “meating houes Lot,” revealing an apparent error in transcription. However, at the Proprietors’ May 27, 1718 meeting, it was clearly stated that that land could be used as a training field as well as for the meeting house.

15. Simeon L. Deyo, ed., *History of Barnstable County, Massachusetts* (New York: H. W. Blake & Co., 1890), 658.

16. What I did find in the Proprietors’ records was that at its May 27, 1718 meeting, Lieut. Moses Hatch and others were authorized by the Proprietors “to settle bounds, and to lay the skirts of common land not yet laid out in the Old Purchase . . . to settle bounds between the land belonging to particular persons and the Lands of the Proprietors not yet appointed to any particular persons use.” It was also said that Hatch and the others “shall not lay out that called the burying place Lot, nor the one half of the fourth Hill Lot, nor that called the meeting house Lot.” It was also noted that Hatch and others were authorized to “sell such skirts or strips of sd common or yet undivided lands as they shall think most convenient for particular persons and least prejudicial to the Proprietors.” As an agent acting on behalf of the Proprietors, Hatch was also authorized to give “firm deeds” to those he sold land to. *Proprietor Record, 1661–1805*, 62–63.

17. David Crowell. "A Record of Some Things Worth Taking Notice Of." Manuscript in the Crowell Family Collection at the *Falmouth Historical Society*. David Crowell was said to have been born in 1720 and died in 1810.

18. It appears that the word "First" was actually added to its name later, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it became evident that there might be another Congregational Society in Falmouth, presumably connected with the East End Meeting House.

19. For more information on the difference between meeting house style and church style worship buildings, see Chapter 13 – "Worship Spaces in Our Congregational Heritage" in this book. For more information on the First Congregational Society of Falmouth, see Chapter 16 – "Town, Church, and the First Congregational Society of Falmouth" in this book.

20. *First Congregational Society, Treasurer Records, April 14, 1834–April 1, 1892* in the possession of the First Congregational Church of Falmouth, MA, of the UCC. Under the page title "Journal Falmouth August 12, 1836, "7/14, Cash Dp. To First Cong. Society, For amount received from Town of Falmouth for rent of Meeting House–\$20.00," 13.

21. *FCS2*, April 1, 1839 meeting, 194.

22. As Buck noted:

*Alongside the ancient territorial parish (or its equivalent, the precinct), a third less regular association sprang up, having no reference to lands and estates, called sometimes a poll parish, but more commonly a religious society. We have then the various ecclesiastical terms of parish, precinct, district, poll parish, and religious society in common use after the revolution. In our own day, however, the religious society bids fair to supercede all the older terms heretofore in use.*

Buck, 20.

23. Buck, 153.

24. *FCS3*, April 4, 1857 meeting, 24–25. At that same April 4 meeting, it was voted to authorize the society's Building Committee,

*to hire from time to time such sums of money as may be found necessary for the repairs and remodeling of the meeting house, binding the society for the payment of the same.*

*FCS3*, September 9, 1857 meeting, 27. The society decided to have the pews in the new church sold at auction, apparently to help defray the society's expenses in this project.

25. *FCS3*, March 28, 1857, 23.

26. *Falmouth Town Records*, the Town Meetings of March 12, 1855, March 3, 1856, March 2, 1857, March 1858, March 7, 1859, 171–254.

27. *Falmouth Town Records*, the Town Meeting of March 12, 1855, adjourned to March 14, 1855, 178.

28. *Yarmouth Register*, Yarmouth Port, Mass., Friday, June 5, 1857, Vol. XXI, No. 27.

29. *FCS3*, August 11, 1856 meeting, 18–19. *FCS3*, October 22, 1856 meeting, 21. At this meeting, the society voted that,

*the Building Committee be authorized to have the house raised, sufficiently high to construct a vestry underneath.*

30. *FCS3*, April 12, 1858 meeting, 34. At that same meeting [35], it was voted,

*that the Building Committee be authorized to procure and put up a suitable iron fence in front of the meeting house lot.*

Presumably that was a fence in front of the society's moved church, for as the April 2, 1858 warrant calling for that April 12 meeting said in its last article:

*13<sup>th</sup> To see what measure the society will take to fence in the new meeting house lot.*

*FCS3*, April 2, 1858 warrant, 33

And later, at its June 29, 1859 meeting, the society voted to have the iron fence in front of the meeting house painted. *FCS3*, June 29, 1859, 40.

31. Reverend Henry Herbert Smyth. *History of the First Congregational Society of Falmouth*, 68. This text was first published in 1903 in *The Falmouth Enterprise*.

32. *FCS4*, May 14, 1930 meeting, 243.

33. *FCS4*, January 14, 1936 annual meeting, following that of 1st Cong. Church, 8 p.m., 282. At that meeting, the following took place:

*The Society then voted to accept the offer of the church and be a part of the corporation about to be formed . . . Motion was then made, seconded and carried unanimously that the newly elected Prudential Committee (Standing Committee), Arnold Dyer, Charles R Stowers, and John M Howe, be authorized and empowered to convey all of the real and personal property now held by the said Society for and in behalf of the First Congregational Church and/or the First Congregational Society to the corporation about to be formed and to be known as "First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts.*

34. The early records of Falmouth include the following entry from June 6, 1687, which speaks of the land set aside by the original purchasers of Sucknessett land, to support a minister:

*We the Inhabitants of Sucknessett being desirous to uphold, and to our ability to maintain ye Publick preaching of ye Word of God amongst us, but considering the Smallness of our people, do therefore think it to be necessary for us to provide and Set apart Some Lands and meadow on marsh, which may be a help & incouragement to any fit person that is or may be helpful to us or our posterity after us, in that good work, and having obtained some help from ye Court to incourage us in such a good work, as appears on Record bearing Date ye 13th of July 1681 and having understood yt ye first purchasers of ye Lands here in Sucknessett were not unmindful of such a thing but did leave a twenty Acre Lot void at that time, the which we will and are minded to lay for*

*Such an end, and having obtained of ye Proprietors of the lands here at a gen ll meeting in Sucknessett that Jonathan Dunham should have Ten acres of land, and all ye skirts of Marsh or Meadow about ye Bass pond and all ye Marsh on ye Northwest side of Quanamut, as appears on Record bearing Date the 23 of July 1677 and now having obtained of ye sd Jonathan Dunham by purchase all his right and interest that he had in Sucknessett of Lands & housing marsh and meadow, do therefore agree that the Lands afore sd, That is to Say forty acres of upland in ye Twenty-acre Lots and half a share of marsh meadows lying at Great Sepewissett and a dwelling house & about two acres of upland adjoyning to it, with all ye Skirts of marsh or meadow ground about ye Bass Pond, or on Quanamut neck that was not divided to mens lots. We do, therefore firmly agree that all the aforementioned Lands with housing marsh & Meadow shall be and remain to be forever to be improved for ye help and incouragement of any fit person that doth or may be employed in teaching ye good word of God amongst us or our posterity after us, and to be perpetually to such an end successively without any alteration or changed forever.*

*X This above written Agreement was voted the 6 day of June 1687 and ordered to be recorded by ye Inhabitants of Sucknessett in their book of Records.*

*Thomas Lewis, Clerk*

*Proprietor Record, 1661–1805, 25.* This record is in the possession of the Falmouth Town Clerk's office. I thank our church's Archivist, Lois Parker, for calling my attention to it.

35. *Proprietor Record, 1661–1805, 24.* As noted there:

*The 23<sup>rd</sup> of July 1677, at a meeting of ye Proprietors of Lands of Sucknessett it was joyntly agreed that Jonathan Dunham should have ten acres of upland all ye Skirts of marsh and meadow about ye Bass pond and ye norwest side of Quanamut neck that is not laid out in lots, to him and his and his heirs forever.*

36. Christopher L. Donta, Thomas L. Arcuit, and Mitchell T. Mulholland, *Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey of Falmouth, Massachusetts [Abridged Version]* (University of Massachusetts Archaeological Services, The Environmental Institute, Blaisdell House, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA, 1996), 31.

37. The image is a portion of the Map of the Coonamessett River (Falmouth, Massachusetts) and environs in the United States Geological Survey 7.5 Minute Series, Falmouth, MA Quadrangle, 1941, northwest corner. It is in the public domain.

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Coonamessett\\_River\\_\(Massachusetts\)\\_map.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Coonamessett_River_(Massachusetts)_map.jpg)

38. Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, *Vol. V*, July 7, 1681, 72. This court order was entered in the original *Proprietor Record, 1661–1805, Town of Falmouth*, 24, with the statements that the court order was made on July 13, 1681, and that it was recorded in the *Book of Records* of Sucknessett on May 20, 1686.

39. Frederick Freeman, *The History of Cape Cod: The Annals of the Thirteen Towns of Barnstable County* (Boston: Printed For the Author, 1862), Vol. II, 428.

40. *Proprietor Record, 1661–1804*, 8,10. The General Court acknowledged the earlier reservation of land for a minister when it recorded the Sandwich Saconeset boundary in 1681. *Ply. Col. Recs.*, 6:71–72

41. H. Roger King, *Cape Cod and Plymouth Colony in the Seventeenth Century* (University Press of America, 1994), 185.

42. *Proprietor Record, 1661–1805*, 25.

43. *Falmouth Town Records*, January 29, 1706/7.

44. *Falmouth Town Records*, February 26, 1706 meeting of the old proprietors within the Town of Falmouth.

45. *Falmouth Town Records*, May 19, 1707. The usual custom in this period was for a church to choose its own minister, then that choice was ratified by the town. Apparently, that did not apply in this instance because our worshiping congregation in Falmouth was not yet an independent church body. Rather, it was still just a “branch church” of the Puritan church in Barnstable.

46. *Falmouth Town Records*, May 19, 1707. The usual custom in this period was for a church to choose its own minister, and then that choice was ratified by the town. Apparently, that did not apply in this instance because our worshiping congregation in Falmouth was not yet an independent church body. Rather, it was still just a “branch church” of the Puritan church in Barnstable.

47. *Sibley’s Harvard Graduates*, Volume V, 1701–712 (Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA, 1937), 221; Dexter (ed.), 262.

48. *Falmouth Town Records*, November 3, 1730.

49. *Falmouth Town Records*, March 7, 1743/4.

50. *Falmouth Town Records*, September 28, 1744.

51. *Falmouth Town Records*, July 17, 1775.

52. *Falmouth Town Records*, October 25, 1779, First Congregational Society Meeting

53. *FCS2*, March 1804 meeting 1.

54. *FCS2*, June 4, 1807 meeting, 8.

55. *FCS2*, December 29, 1823, 80–81.

56. *Private & Special Statutes of Massachusetts*, Vol. VI, 1822–29, Chapter 83, 146.

57. *FCS6*, April 14, 1834, 7.

58. *FCS3*, February 24, 1874 warrant, 102; *FCS6*, 1874–5.

59. Rev. Charles H. Washburn. “Historical Address Covering the 200 Years History of the First Congregational Church in Falmouth, Mass,” *Two Hundredth Anniversary, 1708–1908, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts, October 11, 12, and 13, 1908* (1908), 48–49.

60. *Special Laws of Massachusetts*, Vo. 13, 1871– 875, Chapter 119, 792.

61. Washburn, 48; *FCS3*, March 19, 1874 meeting, 104–106; *FCS3*, April 5, 1875 meeting 106–107.

62. *FCC7*, February 1, 1962, adjourned annual meeting, 216–217.

63. At a special church meeting on July 22, 1968, it was voted to renovate and restore the church house as “the church parsonage.” *FCC7*, July 22, 1968, 240. At a church meeting on May 4, 1969, it was reported that restoration of the Chute house cost \$38,898.19 and that an additional \$3,916.43 was needed to meet payments due. *FCC8*, May 4, 1969, 237.

64. *FCC7*, June 1, 1967 meeting and October 9, 1967 meeting, 233–235. The sale price of the Palmer Avenue parsonage was noted at the church’s October 26, 1967 meeting, 235. However, a law suit contesting a town granted zoning variance related to that sale held the completion of that sale up until 1968. Board of Trustees Report, *Annual Reports For Year Ending 1968, First Congregational Church of the UCC*, January 23, 1969, 35.

## Chapter 16 – Town, Church, and the First Congregational Society of Falmouth

In the early years of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, when our church was first gathered, towns and their churches were essentially coterminous. Both functioned within the bounds of the same territory. Except for a larger community like Boston, each town had its own church, and everyone living in the town was considered under the spiritual care of the minister serving the town's church.



Falmouth in 1796 map of Massachusetts

By the time our Falmouth church was gathered in 1708, it was customary in Massachusetts to say that a Congregational clergyman served in a dual role, as “minister” of his town and as “pastor” of his town church.<sup>1</sup> <sup>(2)</sup>

In the early years of Massachusetts, our town of Falmouth was legally responsible for overseeing the financial, property, and legal aspects of our church. That included the operation and maintenance of our meeting house and the compensation of our clergy. In contrast, the actual covenant members of our church oversaw our church's spiritual matters, such as its sacraments and the particular covenant and confession of faith our church used.<sup>3</sup>

With a few possible exceptions, churches in Massachusetts could not be legally incorporated until 1887.<sup>4</sup> Part of the reason for that was that, following British law, the membership of Massachusetts churches contained “non persons at law,” namely women and minor children.<sup>5</sup> In contrast, church deacons and some ministers could be legally incorporated in Massachusetts.<sup>6</sup>

After our congregation's third meeting house was built, the following important change took place in Falmouth. In 1777, or somewhat earlier, the First Congregational Society of Falmouth came into existence.<sup>7</sup> Such organizations, called societies or parishes, began to be formed in Massachusetts during this period and later to provide for the well-being of the churches in Massachusetts.<sup>8</sup> Such societies, or parishes, essentially took over their town's responsibility for the financial, property, and legal aspects of their town's church. After our First Congregational Society was formed, the minutes of its meetings were kept right alongside Falmouth's town records, up through the society's meeting on April 4, 1803.<sup>9</sup> After that, the society maintained its own records.<sup>10</sup>

Those societies, or parishes, were made up of men of legal age. They were regulated by Massachusetts law and could be incorporated. However, there was no legal requirement that their



members had to be members of the church their society or parish was associated with.

In the early years of Massachusetts, Congregationalism was considered the “Standing Order.” Thus, many Massachusetts towns had a Congregational church, which their town supported through town taxes.<sup>11</sup> At the time our First Congregational Society was formed, most people in Massachusetts were required to pay taxes to support their town church. However, over time, Episcopalians, Quakers, and Baptists were all granted some exemptions from such taxation. Also, Boston residents were not taxed because their churches were not supported by town taxes.<sup>12</sup> In that period, the reasons given for a town supporting a Congregational church were similar to the reasons given in our modern day for town support of a public school system. Many considered such support vital to the moral soundness, well-being, and future of their community and society.

The period between June 17, 1774, and October 25, 1780, was an uncertain one for the towns of Massachusetts. During that period, the Province of Massachusetts Bay had no constitutional government due to their rejection of Great Britain’s authority and laws. Thus, the communities in the Commonwealth were largely left to govern themselves.<sup>13</sup>

Through much of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Massachusetts, Congregational churches usually chose their own clergy, with their towns readily ratifying their choice.<sup>14</sup> However, when a new constitution was adopted with the creation of the Commonwealth in 1780, it contained a law that, as interpreted by the courts, gave towns, their societies, or their parishes much greater power over their town churches than they had before, including the power to select the clergy serving their town church.<sup>15</sup>

Apparently, this law was passed because town taxpayers across the Commonwealth had the “Declaration of Independence” spirit of “no taxation without representation.” Obligated to pay for the established town church in their community, whether they wished to or not, townspeople expected to have some control over it. This situation was particularly awkward for settled Congregational clergy, as decisions that affected their salaries and ministries could be made by, or at least influenced by, people in their towns whose religious views were quite different from the views of their actual church members and themselves.

An example of this is found during the ministry of Rev. Henry Lincoln, who began serving our church in 1790. In 1805, Lincoln sent a letter to both our church and society in Falmouth, which gives us a glimpse of the difficulties he was having with both his compensation and the process involving public meetings, which our society was then using to determine his compensation. As Lincoln wrote, in part:

*Beloved Brethren and Friends,  
I thank you for your friendly attention in providing for my support the present year. I am very sorry it has not been determined for life, as it would have relieved my mind from much anxiety and enable me and my family to rest secure of future support. It is with pain I call your attention again and for the last time to the subject, but I feel my reputation and usefulness, my present security, peace, and domestic happiness as well as*

*the union and harmony of the Society depend on its being finally determined and becoming no longer a subject of Annual debate and contention in public meetings where irreligious men who are opposed to the support of Gospel worship and order were permitted to revile and to use their endeavors to weaken the confidence and love which always subsist between a Minister and his people: –An established, or a stated support is generally in all congregational societies, and it is painful to be a singular exception . . .*

16

Fortunately for Rev. Lincoln, after our society received the above letter, it voted “that his salary should be permanently fixed at five hundred dollars.”<sup>17</sup> In this instance, our society worked harmoniously with our minister, apparently keeping the best interests of our church in mind. But that was not always the case with societies and parishes in Massachusetts towns, particularly if they allowed secular interests to dominate their thinking and decisions.

I will also note that this distinction between Congregational churches and their societies or parishes facilitated the split that took place in the early 1800s between Unitarian Congregationalists and Trinitarian Congregationalists in Massachusetts. In a number of instances, those societies or parishes used their new power to secure a Unitarian-oriented minister for their town’s church, whereas many members of the town church preferred a traditional Trinitarian Congregational minister.

An 1820 Dedham court case (Baker vs. Fales) made it clear that the people representing the town, not the church members themselves, had legal ownership of the church’s meeting house, its finances, and even its sacramental ware.<sup>18</sup> Disputes between church members and their societies or parishes over theology and clergy, which particularly occurred in eastern Massachusetts, led many Trinitarian Congregationalists to withdraw from their churches. In the process, they often felt as though they had been wrongfully dispossessed of the church buildings and religious resources their families had long cherished.

Differences sometimes emerged between our church and its society in Falmouth. However, I have found no evidence of a bitter split between them, such as occurred in the early 1800s between many members of the church in Sandwich and the parish associated with it. At one point, members of that parish even prevented their church’s minister from entering his pulpit at a Sunday service. Thereupon, the minister left that church building “with a large portion of the people, and a great majority of the church [members], and opened a meeting in a hall near by.”<sup>19</sup>

In 1823, Massachusetts law began to allow groups of at least 10 people who had withdrawn from their state supported town or parish church to form their own society and then form their own church. Upon joining such a society, those individuals were then no longer required to pay the Commonwealth tax to support their town or parish church. As Jacob Meyer noted, that new Massachusetts law “greatly extended the privilege of dissenters and consequently weakened the established churches in the towns and parishes.”<sup>20</sup>

When church and state were finally separated in the Commonwealth in 1834, as determined by the vote of Commonwealth citizens (November 11, 1833), and the subsequent amendment of the state's constitution (February 12, 1834), the First Congregational Society of Falmouth continued to oversee our church's financial, property, and legal concerns. However, that society no longer had any connection with the government of our town or its tax dollars. Instead, that society taxed and sought funds from its own members to support our church.<sup>(21)</sup> Massachusetts was the last of the original thirteen states in the US to disestablish its churches officially.<sup>22</sup>

**February 12, 1834 Amendment to the Constitution of Massachusetts  
Resolve of the Commonwealth's General Court**

**"ARTICLE OF AMENDMENT.**

Instead of the third article of the bill of rights, the following modification and amendment thereof is substituted :

As the public worship of God, and instructions in piety, religion, and morality, promote the happiness and prosperity of a people, and the security of a republican government ; therefore, the several religious societies of this Commonwealth, whether corporate or unincorporate, at any meeting legally warned and holden for that purpose, shall ever have the right to elect their pastors or religious teachers, to contract with them for their support, to raise money for erecting and repairing houses for public worship, for the maintenance of religious instruction, and for the payment of necessary expenses ; and all persons belonging to any religious society shall be taken and held to be members, until they shall file with the clerk of such society a written notice, declaring the dissolution of their membership, and thenceforth shall not be liable for any grant or contract which may be thereafter made or entered into by such society. And all religious sects and

denominations demeaning themselves peaceably, and as good citizens of the Commonwealth, shall be equally under the protection of the law ; and no subordination of any one sect or denomination to another, shall ever be established by law."

*Resolved*, That the above recited article of amendment shall be enrolled on parchment, and deposited in the secretary's office, as a part of the constitution and fundamental law of this Commonwealth ; and shall be published, in immediate connexion therewith, as the eleventh article of amendment thereto, in all future editions of the laws of this Commonwealth, printed by public authority. And in order that the said article of amendment may be duly promulgated, without delay, among the people of this Commonwealth :—

*Be it further resolved*, That his excellency the governor be, and he hereby is authorized and requested to issue his proclamation, reciting the said article of amendment, and announcing that the same has been duly adopted and ratified by the people of this Commonwealth, and has become a part of the constitution thereof ; and requiring all magistrates and officers, and all the citizens of the said Commonwealth, to take notice thereof, and govern themselves accordingly.

In 1887, Commonwealth laws changed to allow churches themselves to become incorporated. With that change, churches no longer needed to be dependent on a society or parish to oversee their financial, property, and legal concerns. Though the law had changed, our church continued through the years to work in conjunction with its society.<sup>23</sup>

It wasn't until January 13, 1921, that women were allowed to become members of our First Congregational Society of Falmouth. They were allowed to join after the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution on August 26, 1920. In part, that amendment said:

*The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any States on Account of sex.*

On that day in January 1921, thirty-four women joined our First Congregational Society en masse. Most or all of those women were members of our church. One of the first votes of the society that day was to hold a rummage sale, run by both female and male members of the society, to benefit our church.

On the evening of January 14, 1936, our church voted to incorporate, with the name of the new corporation being the “First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts.” Later that same night, the First Congregational Society met and voted to join the new corporation, thus merging with our church. Both groups adopted the corporation’s new by-laws, which contained the following stipulation:

*Article V – Associate Membership, Section 1. Qualifications.*

*All the present members of the First Congregational Society shall automatically become associate members of the incorporated church and all persons over twenty-one who shall make regular contributions to the financial support of the church may become associate members by signing the roll of associate members.*

However, according to those by-laws, there were also some restrictions on what Associate Members could vote on, compared to Church Members.<sup>24</sup> For example, Associate Members could not vote at church meetings on “issues of religious worship, doctrine, or discipline.” Also, they could not elect deacons or deaconesses, or vote to receive members into the church, or dismiss them from it. When the society merged with our church in this new corporation, all the real and personal property owned by the society was conveyed to the new corporation.<sup>25</sup>

## ENDNOTES

1. “The Parish System,” *Minutes of the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States, at the Third Session, Held in Detroit, Michigan, October 17–21, 1877* (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1877), 212.

Although from another New England state, an example of this dual role and distinction is expressed in this description of Rev. Asa Gray’s settlement at the Congregational church in Wakefield, New Hampshire:

*On the 22d day of September 1785, he was ordained by a Council called by the town, for that purpose, as the town’s Minister; they having agreed to pay him a fixed salary; on the same day his Church was organized, and he installed as its pastor. He was thus called upon to perform the duties of a dual office—minister of the town, and pastor of the church. These duties he ably and faithfully performed for twenty-five long years, when, for certain considerations, he ‘absolved’ the town from all liability on the original contract, but remained pastor of the church until the infirmities of age compelled him to*

*resign.*

John W. Sanborn, *Memorial of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Organization of the First Church and Ordination of the First Settled Town Minister of Wakefield, N. H.* (Wakefield: Printed for the Parish, 1886), 7–8.

2. Reid, John. "The state of Massachusetts from the best information." Map. New York: Published by John Reid, bookseller and stationer, no. 106, Water Street., 1796. Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center. This work is licensed for use under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Share Alike License (CC BY-NC-SA).

<https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth:z603vm77f>

3. In this connection, there is an important distinction to be aware of. In American Puritanism, a distinction was made between the “church” and the “congregation,” the latter being considered a much broader term. In our modern day, those two terms are often used synonymously, but that wasn’t the case in Congregationalism up through much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and possibly even later in some instances. Though speaking specifically of the Pilgrims, Roland Greene Usher described the basic difference between those two terms, as used by early Congregationalists, when he wrote the following:

*[The Pilgrims] distinguished sharply . . . between the Church and the congregation. The former consisted of those adults who had been accepted by the others as consecrated to the service of God and able to give testimony of their faith. The congregation on the other hand included all inhabitants who did not decidedly espouse some other worship. The Church was the governing and disciplining body and governed the rest.*

Roland Greene Usher, *The Pilgrims and Their History* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1918), 190.

4. See the discussion on the incorporation of churches in Massachusetts up through 1866 in Charles Buck, *Massachusetts Ecclesiastical Law* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1866), 117–119.

5. From an October 6, 1999, conversation with Dr. Harold Worthley at the *Congregational Library* in Boston.

6. According to Charles Buck, under early Massachusetts laws, ministers “settled over parishes, where the minister has title in himself over parish lands” were, by themselves alone, considered incorporated. Also, church deacons were considered incorporated “for the purpose of taking and holding, for the church, in succession, all grants and donations, whether real or personal property.” Buck, 110, 114–115.

7. It appears that the society was originally named the Congregational Society of Falmouth, and that the word “First” was added to its name later, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it became evident that there might be another Congregational Society in the town, presumably connected with the East End Meeting House.

In Falmouth town records, the earliest clear mention I find of the First Congregational Society of Falmouth is on January 8, 1778. The previous month, on December 29, at a town

meeting, a committee of 15 men was chosen to consider “in what manner the town should make Mr. Butler’s Sallery good according to agreement and to report their Minds at the adjournment.” Rev. Butler was the minister of our town and church at the time. Town records show that at the adjournment of that town meeting on January 8, 1778, that “committee advised the Society to pay their Raites to Mr. Butler in their produce or Labour. The Society concurred with their report unanimously. Nothing acted in this meeting that is binding upon the people, meeting dissolved.”

Apparently, the society had already been in existence, so presumably it was formed by 1777. At the time, there was a difficulty with Rev. Butler that our church and its society were trying to grapple with.

In the minutes of a January 6, 1775 Falmouth Town meeting, there is a possible earlier reference to the existence of the society, but that is not clear. The sentence in question appears as follows: “Then voted to paye to defray our Town charges this year Fifty pounds and For the SoSiSetyes charg this year Four pounds and for Mr. Palmers Salary this year seventy pounds.” Falmouth Town Records, January 6, 1775.

8. John Fairfield Sly, *Town Government In Massachusetts (1620–1930)* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1967), 90.

9. *Falmouth Town Records & Vitals*, Vol. 2, 1750–1838, Town of Falmouth, 361.

10. The first of those independent record books of the society is entitled *Society Records of Falmouth, 1804*. It is in the possession of the Falmouth Historical Society. Subsequent records of the First Congregational Society of Falmouth are in the possession of the First Congregational Church of Falmouth, MA of the UCC.

11. Jacob Meyer noted that because of a law passed in 1702 in the Province of Massachusetts Bay,

*Congregationalists were enabled, theoretically at least, to maintain a tax supported church of their type in every town, even if a majority of the voters of the town were opposed to it, provided the majority of the voters in the county were in favor of such action. The members of the dissenting denominations were permitted to worship after their own manner, as provided in the charter, but they could not avoid paying for the support of the Congregational churches in their respective towns.*

Jacob C. Meyer, *Church and State in Massachusetts From 1740 to 1833: A Chapter in the History of the Development of Individual Freedom* (Cleveland: Western Reserve University Press, 1930), 11–12.

12. Unlike most towns across the Commonwealth, churches in Boston were never supported by town taxes. They were able to support themselves by other means, such as by pew sales, taxes on owned pews, and pew rentals; Robert J. Dinkin, “Seating The Meeting House in Early Massachusetts.” *New England Quarterly*, 43, 1970, 454–455.

13. Meyer, 97.

14. In 1864, Rev. H. M. Dexter gave the following description of the church and parish system in the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the Province of Massachusetts Bay, prior to the change of laws in 1780 which came with the formation of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Our Falmouth church was gathered in 1708, after Plymouth Colony had been annexed to the Bay Colony to form the Province of Massachusetts Bay in 1691:

*Church and Parish. This is the Massachusetts method, and grew out of the peculiar history of its religious affairs. Originally, none but church members were citizens, so that the town meetings were just church-meetings in another form, and the 'General Court' but a delegated mass meeting of the churches. Then the churches not only chose their own ministers, but contracted with and supported them, and built and owned their meeting-houses and parsonages; assessing and collecting money for the same, not merely of church-members, but of others. A few years later, the towns were expressly authorized to assess and collect church dues like other taxes. When, after 1665, other than church-members were admitted to citizenship, the towns still continued to act as Parishes for the support of the minister, which the Church had the sole voice in his selection; until the 'Parish controversy' arose, which, after being carried through 1692-5, resulted in arranging a concurrent action between the town as a parish, and the Church, in such elections.*

Rev. H. M. Dexter, "Church and Parish," *Congregational Quarterly*. October 1864, Vol. VI, No. IV, 328-329.

15. As J. E. Sargent wrote for a committee of Congregationalists on the national level in 1880:  
*To the National Congregational Council of 1880 . . . The third article of the Constitution of Massachusetts, as originally adopted, and as it continued down to 1833, authorized and required the several towns, parishes, and precincts to make provision at their own expense for the public worship of God and the maintenance of religious teachers, and also gave the towns and parishes the exclusive right of electing and contracting with their religious teachers . . . In 1820 in the Dedham case, and in 1830 in the Brookfield case, the courts decided under this article of the Constitution, and in the changed state of society, that the parish was all and the church was substantially nothing.*

J. E. Sargent, "Report Upon the Parish System," *Minutes of the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States, Fourth Session, held in St. Louis, Missouri, 1880*, 61.

16. FCS2, April 1805 letter, 2.

17. FCS2, April 1804 meeting, 4.

18. "Eliphalet Baker and Another versus Samuel Fales," *Massachusetts Reports: Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts*, Volume 16 (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1864), 146-157 and 487-522.

19. That minister was Rev. Jonathan Burr. The situation was described as follows in an 1855 publication of the Sandwich church he subsequently helped to "gather" after his departure from

the First Church in Sandwich:

*Rev. Jonathan Burr, of Bridgewater, was ordained April 18, 1787. About the year 1811, Mr. Burr changed his views of the doctrines of the Gospel, and also of experimental religion.*

*His earnest preaching of the evangelical Doctrines gave great offence to a portion of the Church and Society; and on Sabbath morning, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1811, he was met at the pulpit steps by his opponents, and forbidden to enter the sacred desk. After an ineffectual attempt to speak, he withdrew, with a large portion of the people, and a great majority of the Church, and opened a meeting in a hall near by. Several ecclesiastical councils were called to settle these difficulties, but without giving satisfaction to either party. BOTH CLAIMED TO BE THE FIRST CHURCH. By a decision of the Supreme Court, the party holding the meeting-house was decreed to be the First Church, and to hold the funds of that body.*

*The 'Exile Church' erected a new sanctuary, in 1813, and Mr. Burr continued as their pastor till 1817, when he was dismissed at his own request.*

*Confession of Faith and Covenant Adopted of the Calvinistic Congregational Church in Sandwich, June 29, 1820, Also A Brief History of the Church [revised and reprinted for members] (Boston: C.C. P. Moody, Printer), 1855, 5–6.*

20. Meyer, 213–214.

21. “Resolve for the due enrolment and promulgation of the Eleventh Article of Amendment to the Constitution of this Commonwealth,” *Resolves of The General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts* (Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, 1834), 605–606.

<https://archive.org/details/actsresolvespass3234mass/page/605/mode/1up>

22. Carl H. Esbeck and Jonathan J. Den Hartog, eds. *Disestablishment and Religious Dissent: Church-State Relations in the New American States, 1776-1833* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2019).

23. “An Act to Provide for the Incorporation of Churches,” *Acts and Resolves Passed by the General Court of Massachusetts, in the Year 1887*, (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1887), Chapter 404, 1018–1019.

24. *By-Laws of The First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts, Approved Nov. 13, 1935 by The First Congregational Church and The First Congregational Society, Formally adopted January 14, 1936*, 3.

25. FCS4, January 14, 1936 annual meeting, following that of 1st Cong. Church, 8 p.m., 282.

*The Society then voted to accept the offer of the church and be a part of the corporation about to be formed.*

*They then adopted the By-Laws as drawn by the By-laws Committee by unanimous vote.*

*The Moderator then asked for a report of the Nomination Committee . . .*



*Upon motion from the floor it was moved that a single ballot be cast for the panel of officers of the corporation. This ballot was duly cast and the officers elected unanimously.*

*Motion was then made, seconded and carried unanimously that the newly elected Prudential Committee (Standing Committee), Arnold Dyer, Charles R Stowers, and John M Howe, be authorized and empowered to convey all of the real and personal property now held by the said Society for and in behalf of the First Congregational Church and/or the First Congregational Society to the corporation about to be formed and to be known as "First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts," such property to be held by the corporation subject to the same uses and trusts as formerly.*

*Upon motion the meeting was adjourned.*

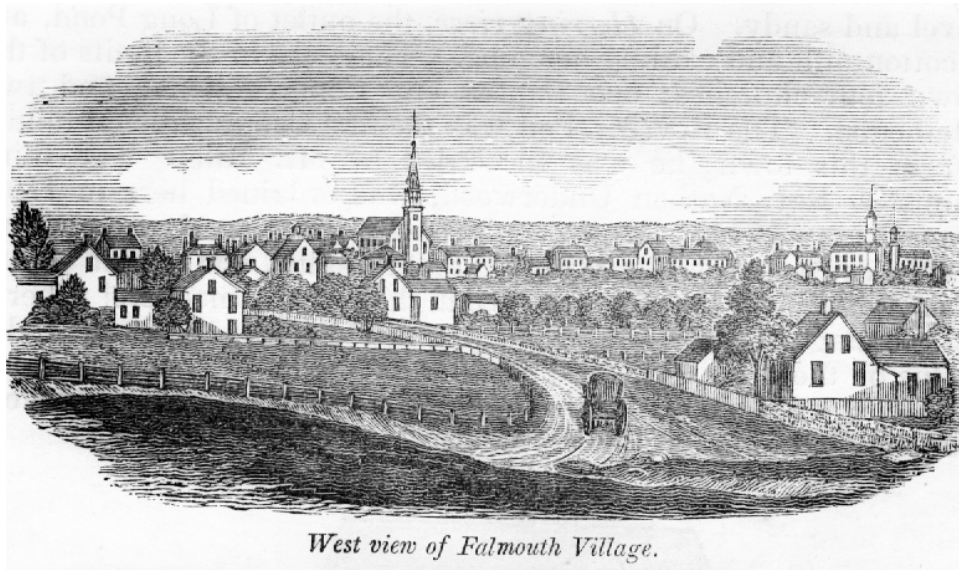
*Respectfully submitted*

*Samuel E. Pond, Clerk pro tem*

## Chapter 17 – Our 1796 Church

### Our Congregation's First Church Style Building: 1796

By 1777, the First Congregational Society of Falmouth, instead of the town of Falmouth, was responsible for the worship building used by our congregation. Desiring a more elegant structure, that society departed from the distinctive meeting house style building. Instead, in 1796, the society built a traditional church style worship building. Located on the Village Green, that building had its entry door and pulpit on its opposite small walls. Also, a tall tower was attached to its small front wall. The tower and front of the church were close to the street and faced the ocean.



*West view of Falmouth Village.*  
 “West view of Falmouth Village”  
 Artist: John Warner Barber

We are fortunate that John Warner Barber made the above sketch of that 1796 church, which was published in 1839.<sup>(1)</sup> Edmund W. Sinnott, noted mid-20th century authority on early New England meeting houses, wrote that Barber’s sketch of our Falmouth church “looks like a 1796 church.”<sup>2</sup> Barber’s sketch of our 1796 church on the Village Green is the only picture I know of it.

Our congregation’s first church style building was about forty-eight feet wide and sixty-six feet long, including its tower. That tower was attached to the church’s front wall and approximately twelve-and-a-half feet square.<sup>3</sup> The building was painted white<sup>4</sup> and had no basement. One entered this church through a door in the tower that faced the street. That tower extended up to an open space, where the newly purchased Paul Revere Bell was mounted, exposed to the weather.<sup>5</sup>



Our church in the  
 above Warner sketch

Above the bell, the steeple had an enclosed top that supported a ball and a spindle, topped by a weathervane. The design of that vane is unknown.



1747 Meeting House  
Cohasset, Massachusetts

The picture on the left is of a meeting house in Cohasset, Massachusetts, that was built in 1747 and still exists.<sup>(6)</sup> It is now the home of a Unitarian Universalist congregation known as the First Parish in Cohasset. Although this house of worship wasn't built in a church style, I'm including its picture here because the tower attached to its main building seems very similar to the tower attached to the front of our Falmouth church in 1796, though our church didn't have a clock in its tower until 1840.

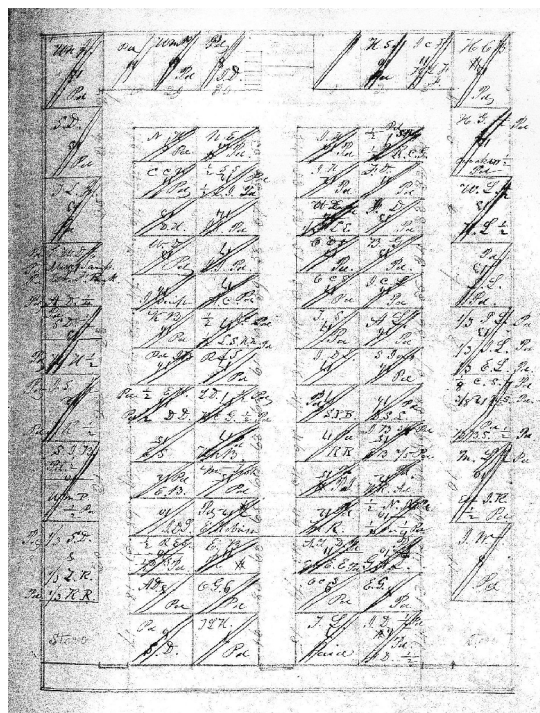
Each wall of our 1796 church apparently had two sets of windows—upper and lower. Each window had two sashes; each sash had thirty-six panes in it.<sup>7</sup> There were four windows in the back wall where the pulpit was.<sup>8</sup> It was said that this church's many small windows reminded one of "port-holes in an old line ship-of-war."<sup>9</sup> In 1908, Rev. Charles Washburn said that this building had,

*16 little windows (7 X 9 glass) on each side...these were afterwards cut together, so that the building was weakened and swayed in the high winds.<sup>10</sup>*

The sanctuary of this church had square pews against each long wall, a pair of side aisles, and a double set of gated pews on either side of the wide center aisle. Oliver Franklin Swift was baptized in our church as a young child in 1841.<sup>11</sup> He remembered that those gated pews were high-backed and that inside each pew, opposite the gate, there was a narrow seat for a child.<sup>12</sup> Also, as Swift wrote:

*the seats in the square pews were on hinges and opened up when the congregation stood and shut when they sat down. This was not always done in the most careful manner and there was the sound of shutting seats, bang! bang! All over the church for some minutes.<sup>13</sup>*

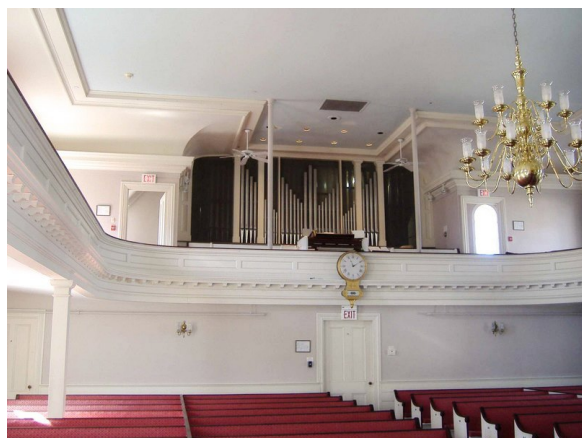
When this church was built, the new pews



Box pew chart of our 1796 church

were auctioned off, raising more than the money needed to build it.<sup>14</sup> Four corner pews were reserved for the poor.<sup>15</sup> The diagram of this chart was made years later, in 1857.<sup>16</sup> A larger picture and description of this pew chart can be found in Appendix VIII – “Pew Charts and Owner Lists: 1756–Early 1900s” of this book. According to Oliver Swift, this church also had,

*three galleries, one on either side of the church and one on the end. The one on the end was where the choir sat and the organ was located.*<sup>17</sup>



Our balcony and pipe organ today

Our present church sanctuary building is essentially that 1796 church structure, though since it was first built, that building has been added to, moved off the Village Green to its present location, and significantly remodeled. However, viewing the back of our sanctuary today, as in the picture on the right, one can still visualize some of the dimensions of our original 1796 church.<sup>18</sup>

For example, notice the partition wall at the back of our sanctuary, below the balcony. That wall now separates our sanctuary from our narthex. The front exterior wall of our original 1796 church came to approximately where that partition wall is today. In the balcony, notice the cast iron supports that run on either side of the clock, from the balcony railing up to the ceiling. The beams that supported the back side of the tower of our 1796 church were near those iron supports. The original timbers of the 1796 church in the attic help us make those determinations.

About 1900, Oliver Franklin Swift described our 1796 church's pulpit, drawing from memories when he was a child in Falmouth in the 1840s and early 1850s. As Swift wrote:

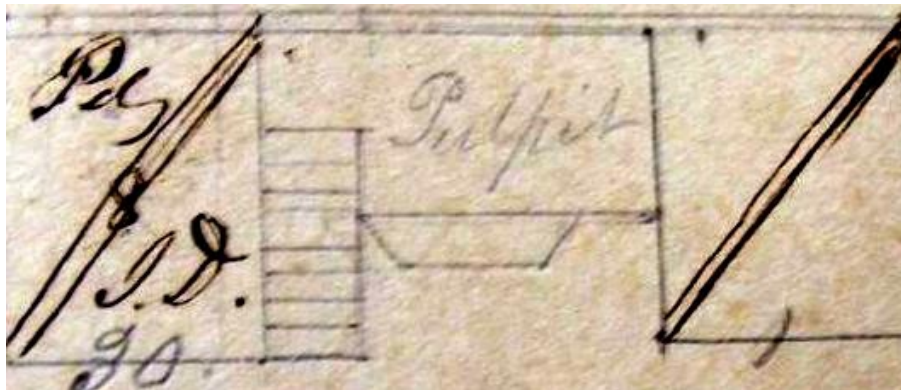
*The pulpit was in the back end of the church. It was round and about wide enough for two or three persons to sit down. It was reached by means of two short flights of stairs from which the minister entered, shut the door and sat down on the seat and was then ready for business. The big Bible lay on the desk in front of him. When he was preaching you could only see his head and shoulders nearly down to the waist line. There was a long platform to accommodate the short ministers and pushed one side to accommodate the tall ones. I have been told that originally there was a sounding board over the pulpit. In my day it was not*



Our 1796 pulpit gate  
Courtesy of Falmouth  
Historical Society

there.<sup>19</sup>

In its collection, the Falmouth Historical Society has the pulpit gate of which Oliver Swift wrote.<sup>20</sup> The following sketch of the pulpit area before our church was removed from the Village Green is taken from the 1857 box pew chart shown earlier.



1857 overview sketch of our church's pulpit

Rev. J. P. Bodfish [not a minister of our church] also had his own childhood memories of our 1796 church and its pulpit. As Bodfish wrote in 1886:

*I remember in my early days the old church, which stood on yonder green. I remember the square family pews and the three-storied pulpit. I even remember how my neck ached as a boy, looking up at good old Dr. Hooker as he preached those lengthy sermons ...*<sup>21</sup>

It was noted in 1857 that our church on the Green had a 6 by 21-foot projection on its back wall, where the pulpit was. At the time of this writing, it is not known if that projection was part of the original 1796 church or added some time later.<sup>22</sup> That projection created a small alcove for the pulpit and accompanying furniture. You will note, however, that there is no indication of that projection in the above 1857 pulpit sketch. It is, however, noted in a sketch of our church's pews from about 1861, after our church was moved off the Village Green.

As noted earlier, Oliver Swift said he was told that our 1796 church once had a sounding board over its pulpit. However, that sounding board was not present in the days of his youth. Swift also noted that there were only four windows in the back wall of our church.<sup>23</sup> Presumably, those windows were evenly spaced near the four corners of that wall and not behind the pulpit in the middle of that wall.

Given the above, one wonders if our 1796 church once had a window behind its pulpit. It was typical in that period for pulpits to have sounding boards above them and curtained windows behind them. Those windows let light in to help ministers read the Bible from the pulpit. If, as Swift suggests, the sounding board eventually was removed from our 1796 church's pulpit, then perhaps at that same time the alcove behind our pulpit was built and any window behind our



pulpit was removed? Presumably, our minister would then have had to depend more upon lamps than upon natural lighting in order to read while in our pulpit.

It is known that after 1850, a number of New England churches plastered over the window behind their pulpit.<sup>24</sup> That may have seemed like a natural step in the transition many religious societies and congregations were then making from worshiping in a meeting house to worshiping in a church style building. The separation of church and state in early 19th-century New England led houses of worship like ours to be used more exclusively for religious purposes. In turn, that contributed to the desire for more church style buildings.

The two pictures below are of the original pulpit in the Chestnut Street Meeting House in Millville, Massachusetts, which was built in 1769.<sup>(25)</sup> I include those pictures here because I think that meeting house pulpit likely looks much like the pulpit our 1796 church had, at least when it was first built on the Village Green. For example, in these pictures, note the sounding board above the pulpit and the curtained window behind it. Also, note the height of the pulpit. The head of a preacher in it would almost be as high as the galleries. And one can easily imagine how, as Rev. J. P. Bodfish said, a boy's neck would ache as he looked up at the preacher in that pulpit, from the pews below.

### The Chestnut Street Meeting House



18<sup>th</sup> century pulpit with a sounding board above it  
deacons' pew with collapsible Communion table below the pulpit

*Courtesy of photographers Carl and Elaine Wyckstrom and the  
Chestnut Street Meeting House*

Some churches in that period, like the one in the Chestnut Street Meeting House shown above, had a pew in front of the pulpit for the deacons and a collapsible table attached to that pew, from which the Lord's Supper was served. But it's not clear there was such a deacons' pew

and table in the diagram of our 1796 church's pulpit, shown on page 207. Alternately, it's possible the open space beneath our Falmouth church's pulpit had chairs for the church's deacons, who at that time were few in number and elected for life. That space might also have contained a small table from which the Lord's Supper was served.

New England churches built in this so-called "Colonial Period," from 1750–1830, often had white interiors, mahogany pew rails and trim, a gold-cased Simon Willard clock with eagle [attached to the back gallery], red carpeting, and a mahogany pulpit [which had been lowered].<sup>26</sup> Our church has such a Willard clock on its balcony today, which is likely from that period, though our clock does not have an eagle.

Rev. Henry Herbert Smythe commented on the location of our 1796 church on the Village Green. As Smythe wrote:

*When I came to Falmouth in 1890, the walls of the Meeting house of 1796 which was removed to its present site in 1857 were clearly discernable on the green, as was also the stone on the edge of the green outside the fence, on the southerly side, opposite the residence of Dr. T. A. Wiswall. The stone still remains in its original position. Its front stood close to the street not far from the line of the present iron fence surrounding the green.*<sup>27</sup>



Our Simon Willard gallery clock

The Wiswall home is currently the yellow house at 57 Main Street.

### East End Meeting House: 1797



The East End Meeting House after its 1842 rebuilding

In 1796, the society voted to divide the town in two so residents in its eastern and northern sections could have their own meeting house, built with their own tax dollars. As decided, our minister, Rev. Henry Lincoln, would preach in both meeting houses in proportion to the amount of tax dollars received from each area of town.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the society was enabled, in 1797, to build the East End Meeting House in Hatchville. To distinguish the two congregations, our church on the Village Green was referred to as the West church. In 1821, the Second Congregational Church of Falmouth was established as a separate parish which met in the East End Meeting House.<sup>29</sup> However, the buildings of both churches were overseen, at least to some degree, by the First Congregational Society of Falmouth until 1841.<sup>30</sup>

The East End Meeting House was originally built in the meeting house style. It had an entrance porch that was sixteen feet square on a long wall of the structure that faced the road. It also

had no steeple.<sup>31</sup> But to satisfy stipulations in a bequest accepted by the congregation, that building was rebuilt in 1842 in accordance with the church style model—as it appears today. In that rebuilding, the structure was turned so one of its smaller walls faced the road. A door on that smaller wall became the entrance to the building. Also, the pulpit was moved to the opposite small wall and lowered. A steeple and a bell were placed on the roof, and the porch and the galleries were removed.<sup>32</sup> At the time of the one hundredth anniversary of that meeting house, in 1897, Rev. Edwin J. Fairley penned this recollection of it from his childhood years in Hatchville:

*Its steeple was a favorite resort of some of the boys, who understood the art of getting into the building even when the door was locked. From this high vantage point, one could see the sea with ships in plain view, and so it was always a place where one could escape for a time from the monotony of life below, and get a look into the world that lies outside.*<sup>33</sup>

### **The Early Years of our 1796 Church in Falmouth Center**

In 1804, a new baptismal font was purchased for our church, and the old one was placed in the East End Meeting House. That same year, new tankards and cups for the Communion table were purchased for our church, and the old ones were sold.<sup>34</sup>

In 1808, our church celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. On that occasion, our church purchased new “church plate” by subscription—possibly the Communion ware shown in the picture on the right. Forty-nine people, all from the western part of Falmouth, contributed \$102, and the church paid the remaining \$14 needed. That Communion ware was first used in our church at the Lord’s Supper on Sunday, February 21, 1808. At that time, our church also voted to make a gift of its old Communion ware set to the Congregational church in Montpelier, Vermont, which was just then being gathered.<sup>35</sup>



Our Communion ware  
Courtesy of Falmouth  
Historical Society

In 1813, the First Congregational Society paid to have our church swept just twelve times, which apparently was considered typical upkeep of such a building in that period.<sup>36</sup> In 1814, during the War of 1812, some Falmouth residences and this church sustained damage when cannons on the British ship “Nimrod” were fired at the town. The “Nimrod” was anchored about a half mile off shore, at the foot of Shore Street.<sup>37</sup>

The previously shown 1857 box pew chart of our church, on page 205, had areas for stoves at the two back corners of the building on the main floor. Likely the first wood stoves for our church were those purchased in 1827.<sup>38</sup> It is also likely that exposed stove pipes, with drip pans at every joint, ran over the pews and/or aisles on the main floor in order to better distribute heat. That was often an unsightly arrangement in many 19th-century New England churches, but it helped keep people warm during winter services.<sup>39</sup>



In our present day, one sees in the middle of our church's attic, above the present chandelier, a square metal bracket and a board that rises to a former hatch at the apex of the church's roof. Along that board there are successive white lines, which appear to be old mortar lines. Those items suggest that a brick chimney may once have been there to vent the smoke from those stoves.

The Annual Meeting of the General Association of Massachusetts was hosted by our church on June 24–26, 1828. That General Association was made up of Congregational clergy delegates from all over the Commonwealth, as well as from some other states. The General Association was one of the two major bodies that eventually evolved into our Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ.



Rev. Lyman Beecher, D.D.  
*Harper's Weekly,*  
*January 31, 1863*

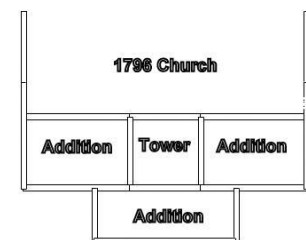
Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher, a famous minister of that time, was a guest preacher at that meeting.<sup>(40)</sup> Beecher was well known for his Calvinist views. At least two of his children, Rev. Henry Ward Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, eventually became famous in their own right.

At this meeting in our church, the Association's ministers resolved to keep the Sabbath according to the scriptures. They pledged to refrain on the Sabbath from all secular engagements and from all travel on steam boats, stages, and canal boats, except in cases of necessity or mercy. They also resolved to give preference to transportation firms that chose not to operate on the Sabbath.<sup>41</sup> Keeping the Sabbath sacred was a primary concern of our 19<sup>th</sup>-century Congregational forebears.

In the middle of our church's sanctuary at that time, there was a beautiful crystal chandelier about five feet in height. It had oil lamps in the midst of draped crystal beads and three circular levels of crystal pendants colored purple, amber, and blue. That chandelier swayed in the breeze when windows were opened, and it scattered flecks of colored light all around our church when the sun shined on it. It is said that our church acquired that chandelier in 1838, when a sea captain smuggled it in from Antwerp, Holland, in a hogshead of liquor.<sup>42</sup>

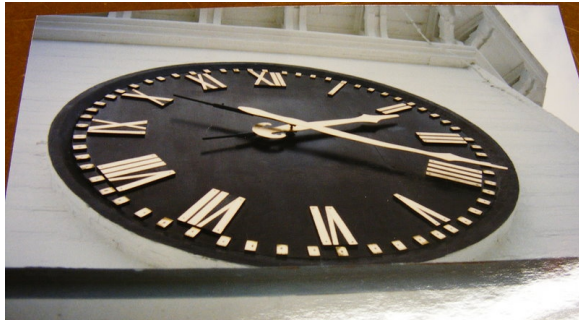
### Our First Church Building Remodeled: 1839

In 1839, in response to a petition signed by seventeen members of the society, additions were made to the front of our church.<sup>43</sup> The front wall of the rectangle was extended to be flush with the front of the tower. Extending beyond that, a 9 by 25-foot enclosed front porch was also added. Those additions essentially encased the lower levels of the tower. As requested by the petitioners, additional doors were also added to the front of the church, bringing the total



1839 Additions  
dimensions approximate

number to three—“one at either end and one in the center.”<sup>44</sup> Having three front doors by which to enter a church was common in this period. It was reminiscent of the style in Gothic cathedrals.<sup>45</sup> Those additions provided an entry hall at the front of the church on the ground level. They also provided a room on the second level, which was used as the church’s vestry. At one time, a singing school also met in that room.<sup>46</sup>



Our present steeple clock

In 1840, it was voted to accept a clock for this tower.<sup>47</sup> New England town governments sometimes placed clocks in the towers of town churches for the benefit of their communities. However, I found no indication in Falmouth town records that the clock accepted by our society in 1840 was provided by our town.<sup>48</sup> One account is that Elijah Swift, a grandfather of Oliver Franklin Swift mentioned earlier, contributed generously toward the purchase of a clock for our church.<sup>49</sup>

Perhaps this tower clock was purchased for our church by him alone and/or with other interested people? Also in 1840, a hemp carpet was installed in our church<sup>50</sup>

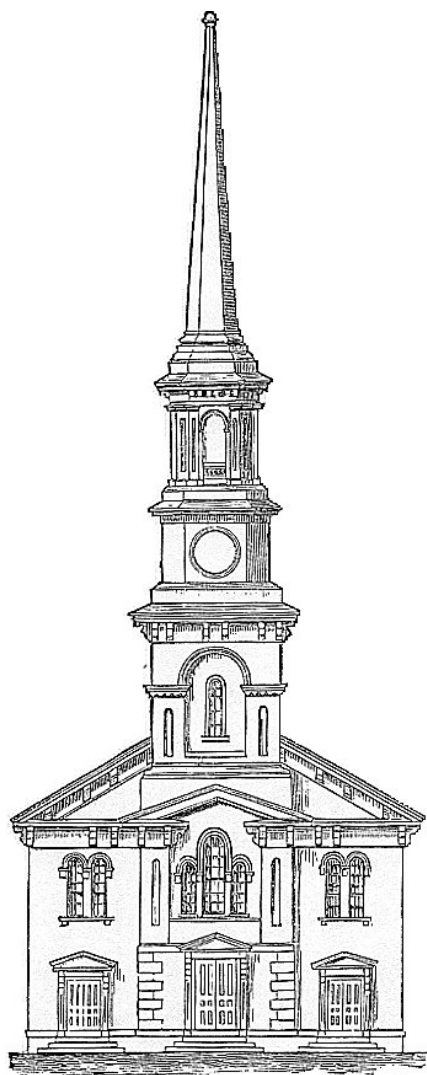
In 1844, the first organ of our church was installed in the end gallery, where the singers sat. That organ was given by the same Elijah Swift just mentioned. As his grandson, Oliver Franklin Swift, later wrote,

*I have been told when the gift was first offered to the church, there was much opposition among the older members of the congregation, because the music they were having was by string instruments, which was in accordance with the Scriptures, where it says, “Praise Him with trumpet, with psaltry and harp, string instruments and pipe,” &c.*

*At one time too, I wished it had never been put in. Your aunt Elizabeth, my sister, gave her services as organist and I was compelled to give my services on Saturday afternoons to blow it, as it was called, by means of a long lever on the side. My arm aches now thinking of it, and, I can hear a voice saying, “not so fast or too slow. Watch what you are doing.” There was a white mark which moved up or down and this I was supposed to watch and give the required speed.*

*That musical instruments were formerly used, I know, for they were put up in the loft above. There was a big bass viol, a fiddle, a flute, a long instrument with a flaring end and a mouth piece like a whistle. Occasionally we small boys used to have a sacred concert as we called it and stole into the church and upstairs. My instrument was the bass viol. Each one with some one instrument blew or sawed or worked. How much harmony there was, you can guess. Whether it was a collection of cats or of boys, it was hard to tell.<sup>51</sup>*

## Our First Church Building Moved, Rebuilt, Remodeled: 1857



Towle & Foster Design  
Zephaniah Baker,  
*Cottage Builder's Manual*, 1856

church to be moved off the Green. Subsequently, two trees were planted in the gap in the perimeter of the Green through which our church was moved.<sup>56</sup>

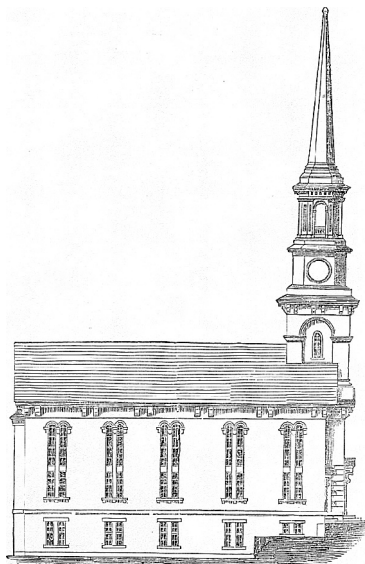
In this new location, a stone foundation and basement were created, and our church building was set upon it. Cast-iron columns were added at key points. This arrangement provided more space for the church. It also allowed stoves and their piping to be placed out of sight beneath the church's main floor. At that time, new slip pews were also installed in the building,

In 1857, the basic frame of our 1796 church building, with its exterior sheathing, was rolled over on logs from the Village Green to its present location and significantly remodeled. The old tower was taken down, and a new, likely more elegant, steeple was built about four feet further toward the front of the building than the old one. The present gallery—less wide than the previous one—and the partition wall below it were built.<sup>52</sup>

The designer and overseer of this project was Alvin Crowell, who was known at the time for building several of the finest buildings in Falmouth.<sup>53</sup> The contractor was Zenas Chadwick, a house builder in New Bedford who had been born in Falmouth.

For the exterior of the rebuilding, Crowell apparently drew upon the basic design for a Thompson, Connecticut, church, created by [John D.] Towle & Foster Architects of Boston, MA, as shown in the 1856 book *Cottage Builder's Manual* by Zephaniah Baker.<sup>54</sup> Apart from some unimportant design differences, our church looks very much like Towle's sketches.<sup>55</sup>

Trees were originally planted around the Green in 1832. One of those trees was taken down to allow our



Towle & Foster Design  
Zephania Baker,  
*Cottage Builder's Manual*, 1856

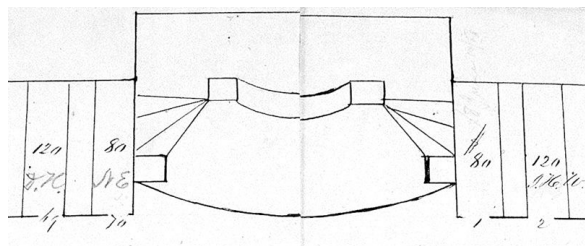
replacing the old box pews. Seventy new pew sections were placed downstairs and twenty-four upstairs.

Alvin Crowell's specifications called for the remodeled church to have a new pulpit, which was elevated "5 steps of 7 ½ inch risers, the pulpit to be of pine of the first quality thoroughly seasoned." The pew chart to the right, likely from about 1861, plus the enlarged section of it below, show that pulpit area with five steps up on either side to reach it. This chart also shows the projection on the back wall of the building behind the pulpit, which Crowell spoke of before the church was moved.

In this 1857 remodeling, a lower platform was apparently built, extending from the rectangular alcove behind the pulpit. The traditional high pulpit was replaced by a lower pulpit desk. Even before 1850, some New England churches had begun to exchange their traditional high pulpit for a pulpit desk on a low platform.<sup>57</sup>

Chart of our new slip pews,  
likely about 1861

Conscious or not, that change seems to have reflected the democratization of church life and an accompanying loss of some clergy prestige. It also seems to have reflected a changing theological perception, namely, that God was now seen as less remote and more approachable than previously believed. The high pulpit was turned into a "popular rostrum."<sup>58</sup> Along the same lines, it is likely significant that our sanctuary in this period was referred to as the "audience room."<sup>59</sup> Even as late as 1927 in society records, the similar term "auditorium" was used to describe that room. However, the term "sanctuary" is the word commonly used to describe that room today.<sup>60</sup>



Sketch of the pulpit area in our church's  
above slip pew chart

The total cost of this project was about \$12,000. \$9,000 of that was paid for by the First Congregational Society. Individuals apparently provided the remainder.<sup>61</sup> The old box pews were appraised, and the owners were compensated by the society for their loss, as according to Massachusetts law at that time, those pews were



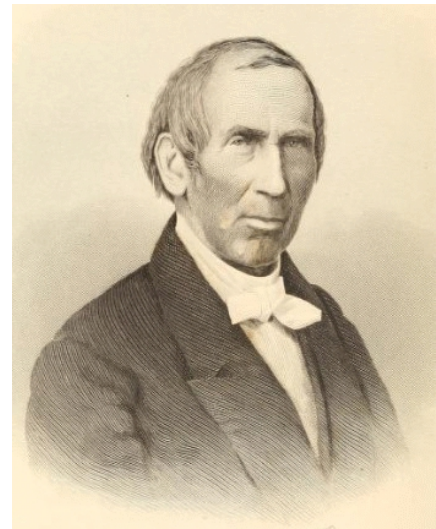
considered the personal property of the people who purchased them.<sup>62</sup> See Appendix VIII – “Pew Charts and Owner Lists: 1756 – Early 20th Century” in this book for the signatures of the people who owned those box pews in 1857. The new slip pews in our newly moved and remodeled church were auctioned off. Our church still uses those slip pews today.

The church’s minister at this time, Rev. Dr. Henry B. Hooker, spent the winter in the Barbadoes with his wife, apparently for reasons of her health. They returned to Falmouth by May 1857, as the remodeling of our building continued.<sup>63</sup> It was reported on May 29 of that year that while working on this project:

*Mr. Browing Swift, fell from an elevation of 35 feet among surrounding stones and was taken up senseless. No bones were broken, and at the end of one week, he was able to walk out.*<sup>64</sup>

During Rev. Hooker’s absence, the church was served by Rev. Erskine J. Hawes, an interim minister who had graduated the year before from Andover Theological Seminary.<sup>65</sup>

The father of that young minister was Rev. Dr. Joel Hawes, a famous minister of the First Congregational Church in Hartford, Connecticut.<sup>66</sup> The elder Hawes was a strong Calvinist, like most American Congregationalists of that period. He was also the author of numerous books. When our remodeled church was re-dedicated on September 16, 1857, it was Rev. Dr. Hawes who was our guest preacher.<sup>67</sup>



Rev. Dr. Joel Hawes

In the bid to create more usable space, we are fortunate that our church’s congregation in this period went to the effort of lifting the church up and building a vestry beneath it. I say that because, after 1850, some New England churches took a short cut to create more space.

Instead of lifting their churches up, as ours did, they simply created two levels in their existing building. They installed a complete wall-to-wall floor at the base of their gallery on the upper level, making that newly created room their worship area. And they turned their lower floor level into a social event area. Apparently, that has not always been a positive change for either worship or social uses of a church’s building.<sup>68</sup>

In 1858, the society had an iron fence installed in front of their newly-moved church.<sup>69</sup>

**Comparing Our Church with the Thompson Congregational Church in Connecticut**

*(after which our Falmouth Church apparently was basically designed)*

*Towle & Foster Architects of Boston, MA–“The Cottage Builder’s Manual” 1856*



Thompson



Falmouth



Thompson



Falmouth

## ENDNOTES

1. The picture “West view of Falmouth Village” is by John Warner Barber in *Historical Collections, History and Antiquities of Every Town in Massachusetts With Geographical Descriptions*, Illustrated by 200 Engravings (Worcester, MA: Dorr, Howland & Co., 1839), 45.
2. Edmund Sinnott made this remark in a March 8, 1961 letter addressed to Mrs. Ernest A. Sterling of our congregation. That letter is in our church’s archives. Mr. Sinnott was the author of *Meetinghouse & Church in Early New England: The Puritan Tradition as Reflected in their Architecture, History, Builders & Ministers*, New York: Bonanza Books, 1963.
3. *Alvin Crowell’s Copy of Specifications for Altering and Remodeling the First Congregational Church in Falmouth When It Was Moved from the Village Green To Its Present Site* [1857]. Taking into account additions to the building after 1796, Crowell described the dimensions of the church on the Green as: “48 feet by 66 feet or thereabouts—projection in front 9 by 25 feet – Projection in rear 6 by 21 feet – height agreeable to elevations.”  
 The tower’s size was calculated based on an examination of the beams in the church’s attic. Charles Place noted that “the earliest record of a meeting house with tower is probably the “New Brick,” Boston, built in 1721.” Charles A. Place, “From Meeting House to Church in New England, II. The Eighteenth Century Meeting House,” *Old Time New England*, January 1923, 114.
4. Oliver Franklin Swift, *Oliver Franklin Swift Reminiscences*, [1900 or somewhat later], 9. The Falmouth Historical Society has a photocopy of this typed manuscript in book form, given by “a descendant of O. F. Swift, Grosvenor Swift, Florida.”
5. For more information, see Chapter 20 – “Our Paul Revere Bell” in this book.
6. “First Parish Meetinghouse, Cohasset Common, Cohasset, Norfolk County, MA,” Historic American Buildings Survey, Frank O. Branzetti, Photographer, Nov. 4, 1940 (a), Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 US. This National Park Service photo is in the public domain.
7. Swift, 9.
8. Swift, 9.
9. George E. Clarke, *The Celebration of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Town of Falmouth, Massachusetts, June 15, 1886* (Falmouth: Published Per Order of the Town, 1887), 20.
10. Rev. Charles H. Washburn, “Historical Address Covering the 200 Years History of the First Congregational Church in Falmouth, Mass,” *Two Hundredth Anniversary, 1708–1908, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts, October 11, 12, and 13, 1908* (1908), 34.  
 Swift, in his manuscript [9], remembered those panes as being 9 by 6. However, Simeon

L. Deyo also says they were 9 by 7. Simeon L. Deyo, ed., *History of Barnstable County, Massachusetts* (New York: H. W. Blake & Co., 1890), 646.

It is possible that the total number of sixteen windows on a side mentioned here [eight upper and eight lower], actually reflects the situation after the front of the church was expanded in 1839. Also, Washburn's description of the windows being "cut together" may have meant that the space between each upper and lower window was cut out and replaced by a window, forming continuous vertical stretches of windows as they appear now on the church.

11. FCC3, Baptisms, 49. Oliver Franklin Swift, child of Oliver C. And Eliza Swift was baptized by Rev. H. B. Hooker in our church on July 4, 1841, along with his siblings, Elizabeth Weston, Adaline Colett, Elijah, and Eunice Jenkins. He was born on April 25, 1840, according to Falmouth town records. Oliver B. Brown (compiler), *Vital Records of Falmouth, Massachusetts to the year 1850* (Camden, ME: Picton Press), 122.

12. Swift, 11.

13. Swift, 12.

14. Theodate Geoffrey, *Suckanesset: Wherein May Be Read, A History of Falmouth, Massachusetts* (Falmouth, MA: The Falmouth Publishing Co., Inc., 1930), 67.

15. Frederick Freeman, *The History of Cape Cod: The Annals of the Thirteen Towns of Barnstable County* (Boston: Printed For the Author, 1862), Vol. II, 464.

16. FCS6. That diagram is found in the ledger entitled *A Record of the Proceedings of the Committee of the First Congregational Society in Falmouth, Massachusetts chosen May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1824, agreeable to an Act passed the 7<sup>th</sup> of Feby preceeding entitled "An Act enabling the First Congregational Society in the Town of Falmouth to dispose of certain Real Estate,"* 15.

17. Swift, 12. Also, as shown in Appendix VIII, there were box and slip pews in the balcony.

18. These determinations were made by visual inspection of the hand-hewn beams in the church's attic, which made up the original 1796 church. One can still see cutouts for the attachment of a tower in a horizontal hand-hewn beam on the original 1796 front wall of this structure. The vertical back beams of the 1796 structure's tower were located about a foot on either side of the two iron columns, which presently extend from the balcony rim, near the organ, to the ceiling. I thank our late Sexton, John Newton, for his help with these determinations.

19. Swift, 11.

20. I thank the late Mary Rogers for finding the following information at the Falmouth Historical Society:

*Heirs of the late David L. Sanford gave the pulpit gate used in the Congregational Church when it stood on the green, to the Falmouth Historical Society. Date, 1796. [As recorded], 'This gate has served as a 'front gate' at the Sanford estate for many years.'*



*Smythe Collection*, Box 1, Folder A, Item 20, Falmouth Historical Society.

21. Rev. J. P. Bodfish, *The Celebration of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Town of Falmouth, Massachusetts, June 15, 1886* (Falmouth: Published Per Order of the Town, 1887), 81.

22. We know our church had that alcove in 1857 because Alvin Crowell, the designer and overseer of the re-building of our church in its present location, included the dimensions of that back projection in his description of the old church on the Village Green before it was moved. *Alvin Crowell's Copy of Specifications*.

23. Swift, 9.

24. Robert F. Meader, "Colonial Church Architecture in New England," *Susquehanna University Studies Journal*, March 1949, 75.

25. The Chestnut Street Meeting House in Millville, Massachusetts, is said to be one of the best preserved 18<sup>th</sup>-century meeting houses in New England. Though it originally housed a Puritan congregation, the meeting house has not had a church associated with it since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. This meeting house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

The Chestnut Street Meeting House and Cemetery Association oversees the preservation of the Chestnut Street Meeting House. That association was formed in 1896 by a Massachusetts Legislative Act. Images of their meeting house are used here with the permission of their photographers, Carl and Elaine Wyckstrom.  
<http://www.chestnutstreetmeetinghouse.org/>

26. Meader, 72.

27. Rev. Smythe's comments are contained in an undated newspaper article in the archives of the Falmouth Historical Society. *Smythe Collection*, Box 2, Folder 6. The identification of this church being opposite the Wiswall residence (1930) is also noted by Geoffrey, 67.

28. *FCSI*, February 1, 1796. Also, see Freeman, 403, who speaks of the town's division as "a line running from Tateket to the North shore."

29. Simeon L. Deyo, 675; Frederick Freeman, Vol. 2, 469. The June 20<sup>th</sup> date is also attested to in *The Barnstable Conference of Evangelical Congregational Churches; Comprising the Constitution of the Conference, Together with a Concise Historical Sketch of the Churches Based upon the Manual of 1848*, Revised and Brought down to the Present Time. (Yarmouthport: Press of the Yarmouth Register, 1866), 28.

30. For more information on the relationship between the First Congregational Society, the East End Meeting House, and the Second Congregational Church of Falmouth, see Chapter 10 – "Rev. Benjamin Woodbury: The Good Fight of the Faith" in this book. The society had authority over the East End Meeting House until April 12, 1841, when it finally voted,

*to relinquish and release all the right, title and interest, which this society has in and to the East End meetinghouse so called, unto the Second Congregational Society of this town ...*

Apparently the Second Congregational Society had reorganized, and the First Congregational Society was now satisfied that it was capable of overseeing that East End Meeting House.

*FCS2*, April 12, 1841 meeting, 206.

31. Geoffrey, 132.

32. Geoffrey, 133.

33. “Hatchville,” Rev. Edwin Fairley, [taken from the *Caldwell (N. J.) News*], *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Mass., Saturday, December 4, 1897, Vol. III, No. 35.

34. Washburn, 30.

35. *FCC2*, February 7, 1808 meeting and February 21, 1808 meeting, 128. A picture of some of that Communion were given to the Montpelier church is shown in Chapter 7 – “Our Church’s Clergy: 1960–2011” in this book.

36. *FCS2*, March 8, 1813 meeting, 22.

37. Deyo, 659; Freeman, 466.

38. *FCS2*, April 2, 1827 meeting, 106–107. The society voted to purchase stoves for its West Meeting House. Subsequently, stoves were also purchased by this society for the East End Meetinghouse, which it still controlled in that period.

39. Meader, 71.

40. This image of the “Late Rev. Lyman Beecher, D.D.” was published in *Harper’s Weekly* (New York: Harper & Brothers) January 31, 1863, Volume 7, Issue 318, 77.

41. *Minutes of the General Association of Massachusetts at Their Meeting in Falmouth, June, 1828 With the Narrative of the State of Religion and the Pastoral Address* (Boston: Printed by Crocker & Brewster, 1828), 7–9. Rev. Henry B. Hooker, future minister of our church, was also present at this meeting as a delegate from the Berkshire Association of Congregational clergy.

42. Swift, 10–11. Oliver Swift described that chandelier at length. He notes that a Falmouth friend of his was told by a sea captain that,

*he [the sea captain] brought it over from Holland on one of his voyages and smuggled it into the country concealed in a barrel of liquor.*

Karen B. Allen, a former Archivist of our church, noted that the sea captain was said to have been Captain Micah Sampson. Karen believed that the chandelier was smuggled into our country in order to avoid the protective tariff enacted during the Presidency of John Q. Adams in

order to correct the United States' imbalance of trade.

Karen B. Allen, letter to Mr. Harry Richardson.

43. Petition addressed "To the Assessors of the First Congregational Society of Falmouth." The petition asked that the following items be placed on the agenda of the next society meeting on March 14, 1839:

*First, To see if the Society will enlarge the Porch of their meeting house, and extend it the whole width of the house, and make two additional doors, from the Porch when so enlarge into the body of the house.*

*Second, To see if the Society will build a Vestry, in said Porch to extend into the body of the house, or out in any way or manner...*

The first signer of that petition was Thomas Fish. After studying the issue, the society authorized altering and improving the meeting house. *FCS2*, May 6, 1839 meeting, 196–197.

44. Swift, 11.

45. Meader, 72.

46. Washburn, 34.

47. *FCS2*, April 13, 1840 meeting, 200.

48. I checked the records of Falmouth town meetings from 1833 to 1841. In 1839, the town of Falmouth voted to build its own town house. At first, they voted for it to be located on the "east end of the Meetinghouse Green." Later, they voted for it to be located on another property.

*Falmouth Town Records*, April 12, 1839 meeting, 180; also subsequent years.

49. I thank the late Mary Rogers for finding the following information:

*Besides giving the organ to the Congregational Church, the cemetery lot, Elijah Swift gave liberally toward the clock and the "green fence". He bought all the trees for the green in Boston and had them set out and took care of them afterward.*

*Smythe Collection*, Box 1, Folder A, Item 30, Falmouth Historical Society.

50. *FCS2*, April 13, 1840, 200.

51. Swift, 11–12.

52. Slip pews did not require as much space as box pews; therefore, the gallery to accommodate slip pews could be narrower. As one person wrote of our remodeled church in 1857:

*The new edifice is surmounted by a spire of tasteful architecture and good proportions. It has a vestry beneath, and its interior arrangements are remarkably neat, and suited for the convenience of worshippers. The lofty pulpit, the numerous small windows, the wide galleries and uncomfortable pews of the old temple, have given place to more modern and less excruciating fixtures in the new.*

"Correspondence of the Register," Falmouth, Sept 12, 1857, *Yarmouth Register*, Vol. XXI,

Friday, September 18, 1857, No. 42.

53. In August of 1857, the *Yarmouth Register* noted that Alvin Crowell had designed and just completed “a small house for public worship, 32 by 42,” for Methodists in West Falmouth. As the paper noted, Crowell had “erected several of the finest buildings in the town [of Falmouth].” “New Methodist Church in West Falmouth,” *Yarmouth Register*, Vol. XXI, Yarmouth Port, Mass., Friday, August 28, 1857, No. 39.

54. Zephaniah Baker, *Cottage Builder’s Manual* (Worcester: Published by Z. Baker & Co., Sold by Agents Only, 1856), 160–162.

55. I’ve visited that church in Thompson, Connecticut. It looks much like our Falmouth church, though it has more external detail work and double, rather than single, long vertical windows on the two long sides of the building, as depicted in the *Cottage Builder’s Manual*. See the pictures of the two churches on page 216.

56. Geoffrey, 96.

57. Meader, 73.

58. Andrew L. Drummond, *The Evolution of the New England Meeting House*, *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, No. S. 353, June 1946, pp. 341.

59. For example, in his 1857 specifications, Alvin Crowell refers to the interior worship area of the building as the “audience room.” *Alvin Crowell’s Copy of Specifications*.

60. Aubrey Travis, who died in 2005, was active in our church through the years beginning about 1923 or 1924. Aubrey did not recall hearing the term “audience room” used to describe our church’s sanctuary, as he noted in a conversation with me on January 3, 2002. However, I noted the similar term “auditorium” used to describe that room in society meeting minutes from 1927. *FCS4*, January 19, 1927, 203.

At the time I spoke with Aubrey, he was our church’s longest-term member and the last surviving person to have been voted a deacon for life by our congregation. That was before our church’s 1936 incorporation, when deacons began to be elected for limited and rotating terms.

61. *Yarmouth Register*, Friday, June 5, 1857, Yarmouthport, Mass., Vol. XXI, No. 27. For more information on this move, see the “Village Green” section of Chapter 15 – “The Meeting House Lot, Village Green, and Parsonage Lands” in this book.

62. Edward Buck, *Massachusetts Ecclesiastical Law* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1866), 145.

63. *Yarmouth Register*, Friday, May 29, 1857, Yarmouthport, Mass., Vol. XXI, No. 26.

64. *Yarmouth Register*, Friday, May 29, 1857, Yarmouthport, Mass., Vol. XXI, No. 26, conveying a report in the *Namasket Gazette*.

65. Erskine Hawes' mother wrote a biography of her son after his untimely death on July 8, 1860, due to an accidental blow to his abdomen from a horse he was trying to walk around. In that biography, Mrs. Hawes said the following about Erskine's interim ministry in Falmouth, which apparently ended in May of 1857, when Rev. Dr. Henry Hooker returned to Falmouth:

*In December, 1856, [Erskine] was induced to take charge of the congregation of the Rev. Dr. Hooker, of Falmouth, who was obliged to take his wife abroad on account of ill-health. In regard to the labors of the pastor whose church he had taken in charge for a few months, he writes: I find that Dr. Hooker has been in the habit of conducting most of his meetings himself, walking to the different districts where the meetings were to be held, and back again, as a general thing. There are three districts which he visits in this way. He told me that he had not failed of an, appointment once on account of ill-health during the twenty past years of his-ministry, — out, rain or shine, walking two or three miles to lecture, and back in the evening. I shall be obliged to work exceedingly hard to tread in his footsteps.*

*March 4th, he writes: The first of April we leave the old church. I am preparing a sermon for the occasion; shall take for my text: 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, etc.', confining my remarks, not so much to the propriety of beautifying places of worship as to 'appropriate reflections on leaving an old sanctuary.' The following is a brief abstract of portions of the sermon:*

*The purpose of the captive exile, to remember, and not forget Jerusalem, as he 'wept by the rivers of Babylon,' although uttered in circumstances so unlike those of the worshippers in that old sanctuary about to be taken down, yet furnished a model sufficiently suggestive of thoughts for the illustration of the subject.*

*Associations that cluster in memory around the place of one's birth,—tender recollections of childhood and of home,—the chamber where was lisped the first prayer of infancy,—the family altar, with all its hallowed remembrances. —Scenes, such as these, were happily introduced to illustrate the more sacred and endearing associations that cluster around an old sanctuary, the place of one's spiritual birth.*

By his mother [Louisa Fisher Hawes], *Memoir of the Rev. Erskine J. Hawes: Pastor of the Congregational Church, Plymouth, Conn.* (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1863), 98, 102–103.

66. This image is from Edward A. Lawrence, *The Life of Rev. Joel Hawes, D.D., Tenth Pastor of the First Church* (Hartford, Conn: Hamersley & Co., 1871) initial page.

67. *Barnstable Patriot*, Tuesday Morning, September 15, 1857, Vol. XXVIII, No. 13.

68. Meader, 74–75.

69. *FCS2*, April 12, 1858, 35.

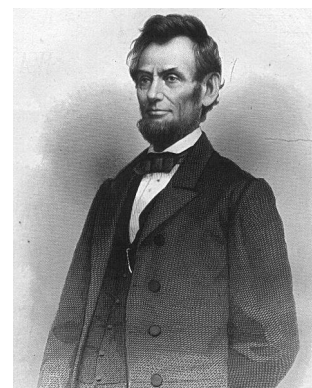
## Chapter 18 – Our Church Evolves: 1858–1899

On April 15, 1865, Abraham Lincoln died from an assassin's bullet.<sup>(1)</sup> That news came quickly to Falmouth. At the time, Katharine Lee Bates was a five-year-old child. Years later, Katharine wrote a poem entitled "When Lincoln Died." The poem was about her experience of hearing that news and the grief it caused in our community and church. As she noted in three stanzas of her poem:

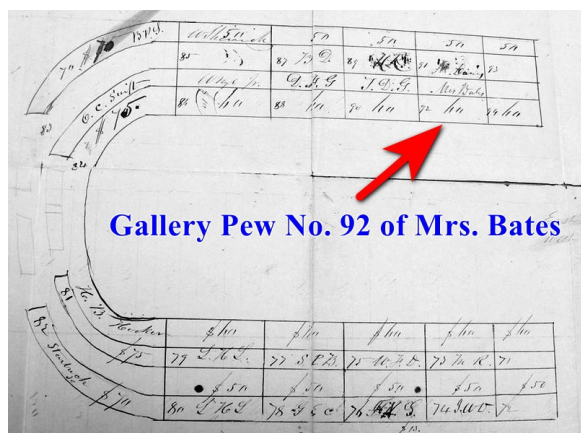
*I heard it and hid me underneath the lilacs  
This mystery to prod.  
Lincoln! Lincoln! Abraham Lincoln!  
And not one angel to catch the bullet.  
What had become of God?*

*Wanted to grief, the women of Falmouth  
Hung the old church, pulpit and walls,  
With a simple mourning, a sacred mourning,  
Already steeped in uttermost anguish,  
Hung it with widow's shawls.*

*The flag on the village green half-masted,  
Bell tolling upon the air,  
Lincoln, Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln,  
The nation's sorrow I felt my sorrow,  
For my mother's shawl was there.<sup>2</sup>*



Abraham Lincoln  
Artist: D. Van Nostrod  
Courtesy of The General  
Libraries, The University  
of Texas at Austin



Gallery slip pew chart about 1861

Though Katharine was just a young child in 1865, one may wonder where she was seated to see our church covered with those symbols of mourning. That question is answered by a pew chart from about 1861 in our church's archives. It shows Mrs. Bates in pew No. 92 in our church's gallery—on the side of our Manse.

When Rev. William Bates was serving our church, his wife, Cornelia Bates, and family likely sat in pew No. 45 on the main floor of our sanctuary, as that pew was reserved for our minister. However, after Rev. Bates died in 1859 and Rev. James Kimball came to serve our church

in 1860, pew No. 45 was likely occupied by Rev. Kimball's family. It is not known if the First Congregational Society gave Mrs. Bates pew No. 92 or if she purchased it, but the above chart indicates that it was valued at \$60. Katharine wasn't much more than a month old when her father



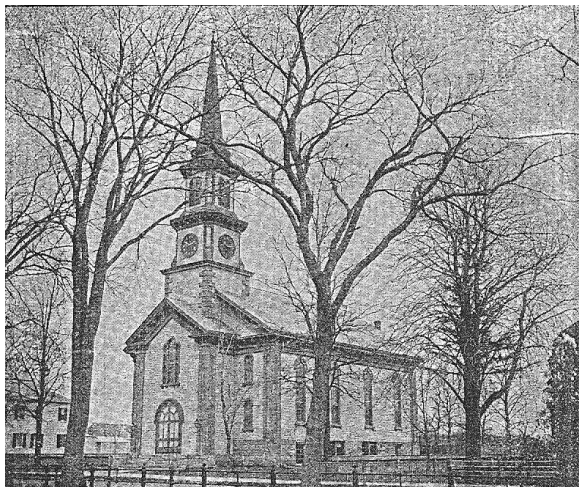
died, so pew No. 92 likely was the one she knew best during the years of her youth in Falmouth. In that period, almost all the pews in our church were owned by someone. Mrs. Cornelia Bates remained a member of our church until her death in 1907.<sup>3</sup> For more information, see Appendix VIII – “Pews Charts and Owner Lists: 1756 – Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century” in this book.

In viewing the Bates’ pew in our modern day, there are two things to remember. First, there was a center pulpit in Katharine’s day. From Katharine’s pew at the edge of the gallery, that center pulpit could be seen more easily than today’s pulpit. Also, the door in the wall beyond her pew to the left was not there in her time, as no addition had yet been built onto our church.

After considering it for two years, the First Congregational Society voted in 1866 “to paint the meeting house with two coats of paint, the north end with but one coat if thought advisable.”<sup>4</sup> That appears to have been the time when brown paint was added to sections of our church’s exterior.<sup>5</sup>



Pew No. 92 – the Bates’ pew



Our church with sections of brown paint added

Bridging the theological gap that separated Congregationalists and Methodists earlier in the 19th century, our church unanimously voted at its January 4, 1867 meeting “to invite our Methodist brethren to worship with us so long as they shall be destitute of a pastor.” At that same meeting, it was also voted unanimously to set up a committee of six men “to preserve order” at our church’s evening meetings.<sup>6</sup> One wonders what the problem was.

At its July 31, 1874 meeting, the church voted that the sermon should be omitted at future Communion services.<sup>7</sup>

In 1875, our society received a Simon Willard Clock as a bequest from Mrs. Lewis (Abigail) Thatcher, who died that year at age 88. As noted inside the clock’s case, her will stipulated: “Seventh – I give and bequeath to the First Congregational Society in Falmouth my clock to be placed in the parsonage of said society for the use of the minister for the time being forever.” In 1987, that clock was, at the request of the minister, placed in the parlor of our church for safekeeping.

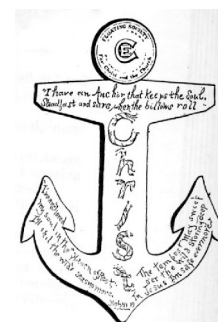


Our Simon Willard clock

In 1879, the church voted “that as soon as practicable unfermented wine be substituted for fermented at the communion.”<sup>8</sup> The state body of Congregational churches and clergy had previously urged our churches to take that position, so they would be consistent with the temperance stance most or all of our churches, including our own, had taken decades before.

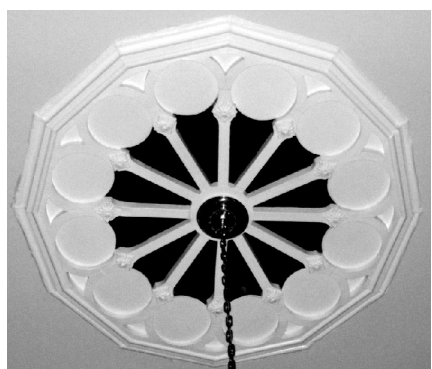
In 1889, it was reported that water closets had been built for the church.<sup>9</sup> Were they the first?

In 1890, in Woods Hole, Antoinette Palmer Jones, a Falmouth seamstress and member of our church, was instrumental in founding a branch of Christian Endeavor known as Floating Christian Endeavor.<sup>10</sup> It was a Christian fellowship group for seamen that became an international organization and still exists today.<sup>(11)</sup> For more information, see Chapter 21 – “Antoinette Palmer Jones: The Goodness and Power of One Christian” in this book.



Floating Christian Endeavor symbol

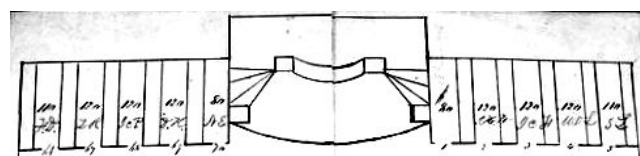
### Our Church’s Sanctuary Remodeled: 1891



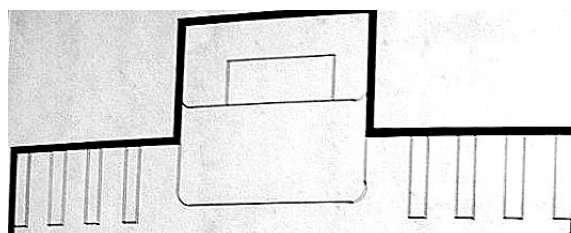
Our ceiling medallion

In 1891, our church was remodeled again, in part to keep up with the trends of the time. The cost of the project was slightly over \$2,000.<sup>12</sup> In that remodeling, a multicolor tin ceiling and moldings were installed. Some of that tin ceiling is still visible in our sanctuary today. It is the medallion with twelve circles located above our chandelier. The wall panels in the chancel surrounding the pulpit area were decorated, and stenciling was added above the wainscoting on the main floor of the audience room.

In that remodeling, the platform in the pulpit area was redesigned and expanded some. To provide more room, pews No. 70 and No. 1, on either side of that platform, were removed. Note that those pews are missing in the “after 1891 remodeling” pew chart below.



Pulpit area before 1891 remodeling



Pulpit area after 1891 remodeling

The photo on the next page shows our audience room, as it was called then, decorated for a special event after that 1891 remodeling. In that photo, one can see that our church continued to



use a pulpit desk, perhaps the same one it added in 1857 to replace its relatively high pulpit. In that photo, one can also see that there is a low partition with pew racks in front of all the front pews. Between the pulpit area platform and those partitions, there was little open space across the front of the church. Also, notice what appears to be a small organ near the left corner of the pulpit platform. That was used in addition to our church's organ in the gallery. First Congregational Society records of 1889–1890 indicate that \$3 was paid for the repair of an organ in front of the pulpit.<sup>13</sup>



Our church's "audience room," likely between 1891–1894  
*Courtesy of Falmouth Historical Society*



Our Communion table  
purchased in 1891 or earlier

In the above photo, you can also see the Communion table, which was to the right of the pulpit platform. That same table is now being used in the narthex of our church. The removal of pews No. 1 and No. 70 made space for both that organ and this Communion table.

On Communion Sundays, that table was likely placed on the platform in front of the pulpit so the congregation could be served from it. It's likely our church celebrated Holy Communion about six Sundays a year then, as seems to have been common in churches like ours in that period. Also, during the week before a Communion service was held, our minister often gave a lecture to instruct our parishioners in that sacrament's special significance.

In that same sanctuary photo, notice also that the pews in the gallery extend right to the wall. There are no doors or windows on that wall. Also, no small Communion cup holders are visible in the pews. Likely, at the time of that photo, our church had not yet begun to receive Communion in little cups, though that was soon to come.



The pulpit desk and chancel created in 1891

Pulpit furniture was purchased for that 1891 remodeling. In the photograph of the pulpit area above, note the three ornate chairs behind the pulpit. Such three-chair sets for church sanctuaries were often considered symbolic of the Trinity. In some churches, though not necessarily in our church, those chairs replaced a sofa that had been behind the pulpit.<sup>14</sup> Our church still possesses two of those pulpit chairs, as shown in the picture on the right. .



Pulpit area chairs today



A pedestal table today

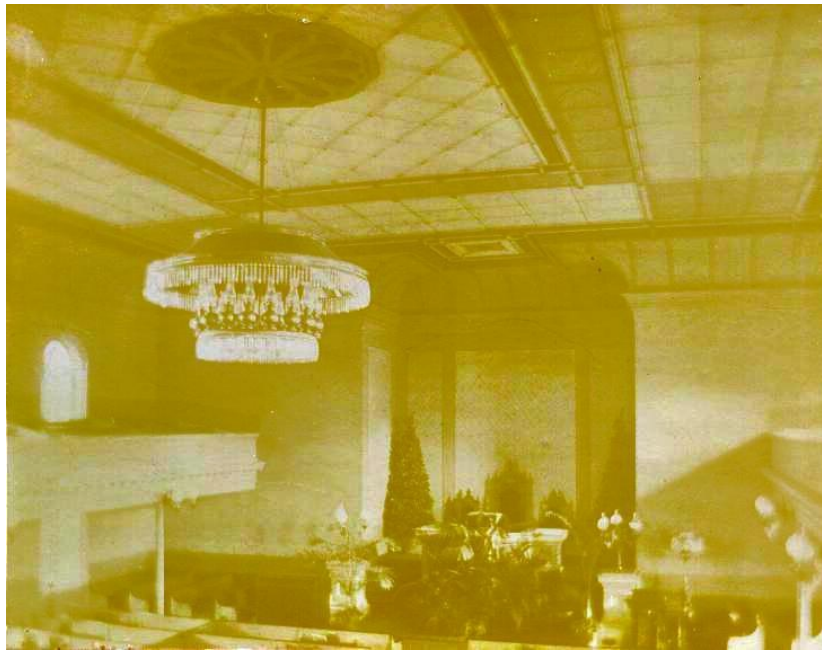
The above photo also shows a lectern and two chairs on the platform below that remodeled pulpit. Likely, those chairs were for our church's deacons. Our minister also likely sat in them at times. Note also the two short, dark pedestal tables on either side of the front of the platform. Our church still uses those tables in our sanctuary at times, for example, to hold flower bouquets or a picture of a person during his or her funeral or memorial service. The Communion table, pulpit chairs, and pedestal tables are all similar in design. It seems likely they were all purchased at the same time, presumably for this 1891 remodeling project.

On Friday evening, February 16, 1891, a service was held to rededicate our audience room. The guest speaker was Rev. Judson Smith, D.D., Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. His theme was “Our Foreign Missions.”<sup>15</sup> (<sup>16</sup>)

In 1894, our church replaced the chandelier in its audience room. As reported, that chandelier was first lit on a Sunday evening “and gave perfect satisfaction. It was a large one of 17 Rochester burners.”<sup>17</sup> The photograph below likely shows that new chandelier. In that photo one can see that the lamps previously over the pulpit have been removed.



Seal of the ABCFM



Our “audience room,” likely some time between 1894–1911 and with the new chandelier with seventeen Rochester burners,  
*Courtesy of Falmouth Historical Society*

In this photo, two Christmas trees appear to be in the chancel. If so, this photo was likely taken after our church began observing Christmas in the audience room. Christmas was observed there initially with our church school children, then somewhat later in adult worship services. For more information, see Chapter 24 – “Christmas Finally Comes to Our Church” in this book.

In 1897, Elijah Swift and his wife Fannie, both in Wisconsin at the time, gave a parcel of land to the First Congregational Society. That parcel abutted the church’s back property line. On that added land, our society then built a shed with eight stalls for the horses and carriages of our parishioners.<sup>18</sup>

In June of 1899, the Women’s Union of our church was formed. It then had eighty

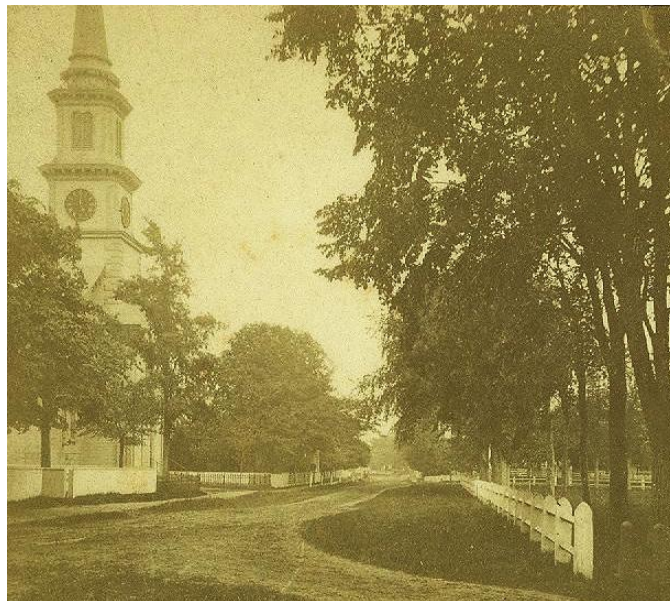


members.<sup>19</sup> The Union was a combination of three women's groups in our church that had been formed at the time of Rev. Dr. Henry Hooker's ministry.<sup>20</sup> Through the years, the Women's Union has played a key role in supporting our church and people in need. A notable example of this was the Union's efforts to help victims of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, as shown in the newspaper article below.<sup>(21)</sup>

The Woman's union of the First Congregational church solicit contributions of clothing, etc., for the San Francisco sufferers.—Any person having articles to contribute will kindly leave the same at the vestry on Wednesday afternoon, May 16, when the same will be packed and forwarded. All contributions will be gratefully received.

May 12, 1906,  
*The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Mass.

In the picture from 1911 or earlier that appears below, note the dirt roads and the iron fence in front of our church.<sup>(22)</sup>



Our church viewed from Hewins Street,  
note the church's iron fence  
*Courtesy of Falmouth Historical Society*

## ENDNOTES

1. The image of Abraham Lincoln is from an engraving by D. Van Nostrand, supposedly based on a photograph by Matthew Brady taken on January 4, 1864. The engraving appeared in Frank Moore, ed., *Portrait Gallery of the War* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1865). It is in the public domain and used courtesy of The General Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.  
[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Abraham\\_Lincoln.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Abraham_Lincoln.jpg)

2. Katharine Lee Bates, "When Lincoln Died," *Youth's Companion*, April 27, 1922, 212.

3. *FCC4*, Removed from membership, January 21, 1907, reason: death, 35, 50.

4. *FCS3*, April 10, 1866 meeting, 69. At the April 11, 1864 meeting, the request to paint the meeting house was tabled [63]. At the April 11, 1865 meeting, it was voted not to paint it [66].

5. In 1864, a Nashua, Iowa, church was painted completely brown because that was the cheapest paint [Ohio Mineral Paint] that could be found, and it was believed that paint would protect their church's exterior. Known as "The Little Brown Church of the Vale, that church became famous because of a song associated with it shortly after it was built and dedicated. That song, "The Church in the Wildwood," written by William Pitts, begins with these words:

*There's a church in the valley by the wildwood,  
 No lovelier spot in the dale;  
 No place is so dear to my childhood  
 As the little brown church in the vale.*

Through the years, many couples have sought to be married in that little brown church. As of October 2009, 73,000 weddings had been held there.

<http://www.littlebrownchurch.org/churchhistory.cfm>

One can wonder: did the cost of the paint have anything to do with sections of our church's exterior being painted with some brown paint instead of using only white paint on church exteriors, the Greek Revival architectural style that began to be popular in New England churches in the 1830s? Or was it purely a decision based on aesthetics? From church records, we do know that Rev. James Kimball left our church in 1870 because our church was not able to pay "the increasing expense attending the pastor's support." *FCC3*, November 17, 1870, Ecclesiastical Council meeting.

6. *FCC3*, January 4, 1867 meeting, 155.

7. *FCC3*, July 31, 1874 meeting.

8. *FCC3*, January 3, 1879 meeting.

9. *FCS6*, 1888–1889.

10. A branch of the Young Peoples' Society of Christian Endeavor in our Falmouth church was formed on August 17, 1887. Yarmouth Register, Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts, Saturday,

February 14, 1891, Vol. 55, No. 7. Three years later, Floating Christian Endeavor was formed.

11. The Christian Endeavor image of the anchor cross is from Rev. Francis Clark, *World Wide Endeavor: The Story of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor* (Gillespie, Metzger, and Kelley, 1895), 384.

12. *FCS6*, 1891 [after 1891–1892 page]. The largest expenses in that remodeling were the following:

Upholstering – \$537	Painting – \$112.75
Installing Tin Ceiling – \$515	Pulpit Furniture and Freight – \$101.74
Staging & Furring – \$334.61	Making Platform, etc. – \$55.92
Decorating – \$175	Labor on Carpets – \$36.83

13. *FCS6*, 1889–90. That same record shows expenses for blowing [pumping] the organ [presumably the gallery organ]: \$13.00 on Sundays and \$4.95 for rehearsals.

14. Robert F. Meader, “Colonial Church Architecture in New England,” *Susquehanna University Studies Journal*, March 1949, p. 73–74, footnote number 15.

15. *Barnstable Patriot*, February 3, 1891, Vol. LXI, No. 31; *The Sandwich Observer*, Tuesday Evening, February 17, 1891, Vol. VII, No. 45, 3; *The Congregationalist*, 19 February 1891, Vol. LXXV I, Boston, Thursday, 19, February 1891, No. 8, 4.

16. The image of the ABCFM seal is from *The Day Breaking; or, Light in Dark Lands* (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1870), Title Page, 41.

17. Clipping from the *Falmouth Enterprise*, located in their archive. Handwritten on the clipping was the date 1894. (Research Envelope – First Congregational Church [General] 184\_ through 1959)

*FCC4*, January 8, 1897 meeting, 80. At this meeting, it was voted “that the Society be recommended to place the chandelier recently removed from the audience room at the disposal of the C. C. Building Society.” The reference is to the Congregational Church Building Society, Congregationalism’s national organization, which was assisting in the development of new Congregational churches, particularly in the newer areas of our expanding country.

To better understand what was involved in illuminating our sanctuary with a chandelier with Rochester burners, here is a description from 1890 of the use of such oil lamps.

*Chandeliers can be had in beautiful designs for lamps as well as gas, and at just as wide a range of prices. The Rochester burners are the best, giving a clear, soft light. They consume a great deal of oil, but one good lamp is better than six poor ones. All lamps should be filled in the daytime and at a regular hour. They must not be too full; they must be very carefully wiped off. The globes and chimneys should be kept clean and clear. The wicks are best trimmed by simply rubbing off the charred surface. The light is often affected by the holes in the burner becoming clogged. This can be remedied by boiling the burners in a strong solution of washing soda. When the lamp is lighted, it will be very evident to one sense at least, whether it is too full, not wiped perfectly dry, or turned*

*down too low, as from any of these causes an odor that is powerful if not sweet, will ascend toward heaven. This peculiar fragrance always reminds me of a line of Bulwer's : 'And perfumed light from alabaster lamps.' If kerosene oil is not perfumed light, what is it?*

M. Warren Hale, "Perfumed Light," *Good Housekeeping: A Fortnightly Journal*, Springfield, Massachusetts, Vol. 10, No. 8, February 15, 1890, 178.

18. *Eau Claire County, Wisconsin Deed*, Executed May 7, 1897, Book 231, Page 367. After automobiles came into use, our church no longer needed the shed. Dr. and Mrs. A. L. Chute, who lived in the house [today's Manse] west of the church, had the shed moved toward the back of their property. Eventually, the town of Falmouth purchased four and a half acres of the back of that Chute property in order to build school playing fields on it. That likely led to the demise of that old shed, which then sat on that property. *Falmouth Enterprise*, Friday, April 6, 1962, 1.

19. *FCC4*, Report from the Women's Union received after annual meeting, January 5, 1900, 99.

20. Margaret G. Long, *The Treasured Heritage of The First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts, 1708–1958*, 21.

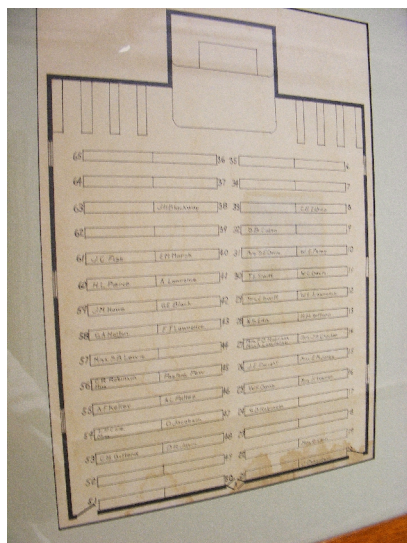
21. *The Enterprise*, May 12, 1906, Vol. XII, No. 6, Falmouth, Massachusetts.

22. That might be the iron fence installed in front of our church in 1858, not long after it was moved off the Village Green. *FCS2*, April 12, 1858, 35.

## Chapter 19 – Our Church Evolves: 1900–2011

By 1900, individual Communion cups were being used in our church, and the following year, more Communion cup racks were authorized to be purchased for our pews, if needed.<sup>1</sup> In 1908 and possibly earlier, the area behind the organ in the gallery was used to contain the many volumes of our church's library, which were maintained through the 1786 bequest of Dr. Abner Hersey of Barnstable.<sup>2</sup>

The pew chart of our church below likely dates from 1905 or somewhat later. It was at a time when the First Congregational Society of Falmouth was buying back pews from their owners, so there could be free pews in our church that anyone could sit in. In this chart, a number of pews on

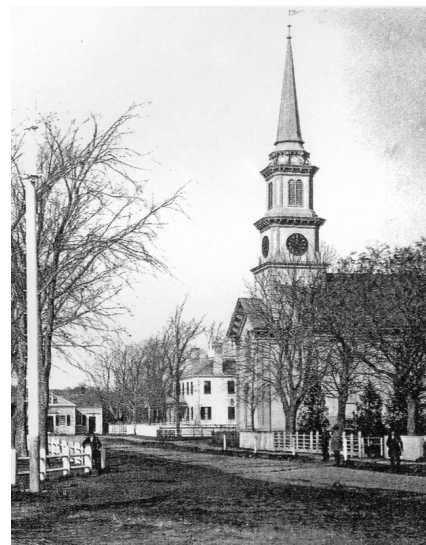


Early 20<sup>th</sup> century pew chart

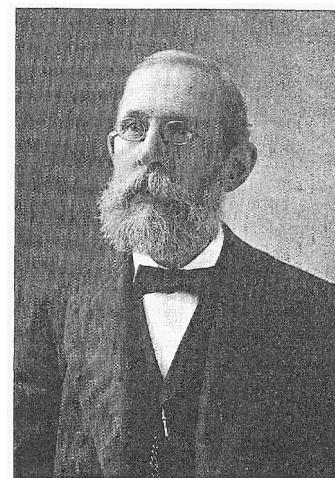
our church's main floor do not have names associated with them. In this period, it became important for our church to have ushers, to show newcomers which particular pews were not owned, thus free for them to sit in.<sup>3</sup> For more information, see Appendix VIII – "Pew Charts and Owner Lists: 1756 – Early 1900s," in this book.

S. B. Capen is listed in pew No. 32 on this chart. Samuel Billings Capen was a famous Congregationalist of his time. He had a summer home on Falmouth's Clinton Avenue and worshiped seasonally in our church. Capen was an astute

Jamaica Plain businessman who led several important Congregational groups on the national denominational level. He last served as President of the Board of the noted American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), which Congregationalists and our church strongly supported. Capen died unexpectedly in 1914 while touring ABCFM missions in China. He wasn't a member of our church. Even so, at the time of his death, our church records devoted a page to honoring him as a "brother Deacon" who "was prominent in the larger works of the Kingdom, who sacrificed business and leisure that those works might be advanced."<sup>4</sup> (<sup>5</sup>)



Our church before 1912  
*Courtesy of  
Falmouth Historical Society*



*Samuel B. Capen*



Carrying the ecumenical spirit even further, our church voted unanimously in 1908 to approve of and subsequently join, if created, the proposed union of Congregationalists, United Brethren and Methodist Protestants in a national denominational body. But that denominational union did not take place.<sup>6</sup> That year, our church also celebrated its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary and published a booklet with the proceedings, shown in the picture on the right.

In 1911, our church was painted completely white again, replacing the sections of brown paint it had then.<sup>7</sup> Also this year, our church was wired for electricity for the first time.<sup>8</sup> It's likely the church also began replacing its oil lamp fixtures at this time.

In 1911, our church also voted to ask the Barnstable Association of Churches to grant a preacher's license to our church member, Antoinette Palmer Jones, which the Association did. Antoinette was likely the first female to receive such a license from our Association.<sup>9</sup> As meaningful as it was, that license did need to be renewed on a yearly basis and was not equivalent to ordination.

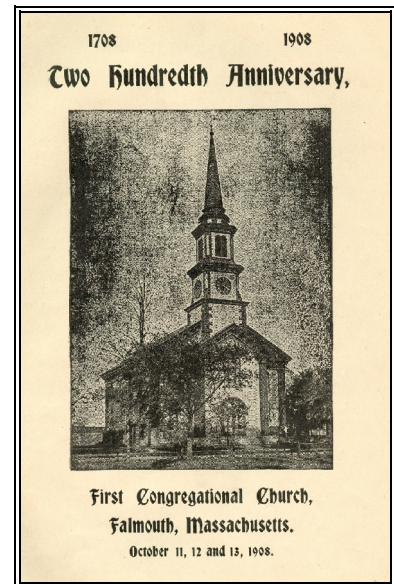
In 1913, Antoinette Palmer Jones attended the meeting of Congregationalists in Kansas City, Missouri, which adopted Congregationalism's historic "Kansas City Statement of Faith," which begins with these words:

*We believe in God the Father, infinite in wisdom, goodness, and love, and in Jesus Christ, his Son, our Lord and Savior, who for us and for our salvation lived and died and rose again and liveth evermore, and in the Holy Spirit, who taketh of the things of Christ and revealeth them to us, renewing, comforting, and inspiring the souls of men.*

Our church adopted that Statement of Faith as its own. It still appears in our church's Bylaws, except in our church's version of that statement, where the four words "who surrender to Him" are added to the end of the above quoted sentence.<sup>10</sup>

In 1919, our church voted to federate with the Methodist church of Falmouth. Our congregation's idea was that our minister would be the senior pastor of the new federated church and the Methodist minister would be the assistant pastor. The Methodist church chose not to enter that proposed federation.<sup>11</sup>

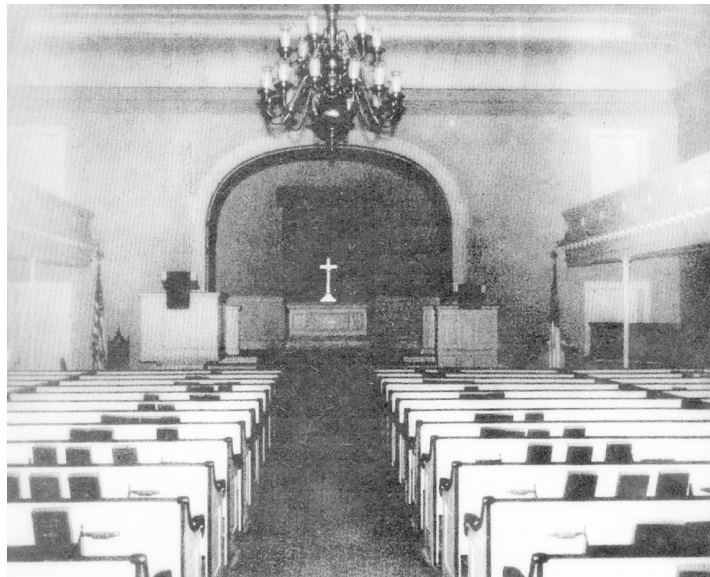
Apparently, pews were no longer sold in our church by 1926.<sup>12</sup> In 1933, our church celebrated its 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In 1936, our church was incorporated, and members of the First Congregational Society of Falmouth were automatically allowed to become associate members of our church. However, in accordance with Massachusetts law, there were some legal restrictions



on their participation in our corporation. For more information, see Chapter 16 – “Town, Church, and the First Congregational Society of Falmouth” in this book.

### **Our Church’s Sanctuary Remodeled Again: 1942–1943**

In 1942, by a vote of twenty-one to three, our church decided to replace the central pulpit in our sanctuary with the present split chancel.<sup>13</sup> That was a dramatic shift away from longstanding Congregational tradition. However, many Congregational heritage churches made that shift during this period. It was said then that making such a change gave congregations more of a focal point to look at during their worship.



Our 1942–1943 remodeled sanctuary in 1958  
with likely its first sanctuary cross

John F. Jackson, an architect from Passaic, New Jersey, designed our new split chancel and chose the colors for our sanctuary.<sup>(14)</sup> The total cost of the project, including re-upholstering, was \$3181.98.<sup>15</sup> Mr. and Mrs. James Hills of Brooklyn, New York, who were also summer residents of Menauhant, were key figures in this project.<sup>16</sup>

In this remodeling, an arch with a stylized keystone was created over the chancel. The pulpit and the lectern were placed in front of and on opposite sides of the chancel. An altar-like piece of furniture was placed in the center of the chancel, and a gold-painted, wooden cross bearing the medallion of the Trinity was set upon it. An “Ecclesiastical Red” dossal was installed on the wall behind those items.

Congregationalists had long avoided having crosses in their churches, but in this period they began to accept crosses and make them such a focal point. In fact, as Rev. Ralph Long, our church’s minister at that time, wrote, it was proposed at the 1940 meeting of the General Council

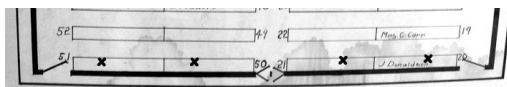
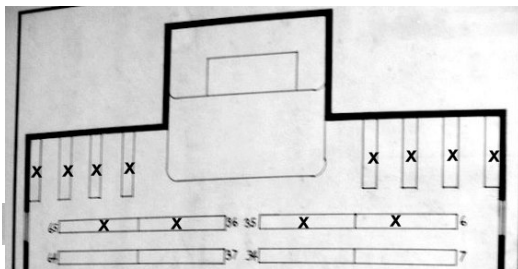
of Congregational Churches of the United States that the ancient symbol of a cross with a medallion representing the Trinity at the center of it should be made a symbol of the denomination.<sup>17</sup>

Through the centuries, Congregationalists also avoided having altars in their churches because they saw altars as a symbol of the view that Jesus is re-sacrificed every time Holy Communion is served. Instead, along with other Protestants, Congregationalists have believed that Jesus was, and only needed to be, sacrificed just once for our salvation. For that reason, and because Congregationalists commonly received the elements of Communion together while seated—symbolizing the body of Christ—they preferred to serve that sacrament from a Communion table. However, when Congregationalists adopted this split chancel design, they sometimes made the following compromise: they called that new piece of furniture in their chancel an “altar-table.” Our own church has often used that term for it.



Likely our first sanctuary cross

This remodeling took place during the hard times of the Second World War. As the record indicates, mahogany for chancel pieces was given by William MacDougall from his family’s boatyard “without money and without price and when it was not to be had on the market.” Also, women in our church contributed their efforts by sewing our sanctuary’s pew cushions as a “labor of love.”<sup>18</sup>



Removed pews marked with X

During this project, sixteen pew sections were removed, namely: four pews on either side of the pulpit, the front row of four pews with the partition panels in front of them, and the row of four pews across the back of the church. Also, some of those removed side pews were placed in the newly remodeled split chancel, where they remain today. The steps up to the chancel were changed, making the front part of the platform about two feet wider than before. The central aisle of the church was widened by nearly ten inches. To accomplish that, the pews on both sides of the center were cut back.<sup>19</sup> After this remodeling, a rededication service was held in our

sanctuary on Sunday, May 23, 1943.

On a November Sunday in 1943, a special service members’ shrine in our sanctuary was dedicated. As our local newspaper described it:

*Rev. Ralph H. Long asked that church members offer prayers for and write letters to servicemen from families of his parish. At the right of the new chancel completed at the church last spring is a new white-painted desk lectern, surmounted by a wooden cross*

*flanked by candles. Before it is a prayer cushion. On the desk are two bound scrapbooks with names and service records of all men and boys in armed service, with their service addresses, names of parents . . .*<sup>20</sup>

In 1951, Mrs. James Hills gave our present chandelier to our church and possibly also the wall sconces underneath the balcony. Those sconces took the place of light fixtures located at intervals along the base of the balcony. In 1951, a baptismal font was given as a memorial gift to our church.<sup>21</sup> Since the late 1980s, that font, located under a balcony, has been used to hold a baptismal bowl, which is brought to the front of the chancel at the time of a baptism so it can be witnessed by everyone in the sanctuary.



Our present chandelier

In 1952, a new balcony organ, Wurlitzer Organ Style 25, was purchased for \$4,385 as a memorial gift to our church. In 1955, Mrs. Hills donated a chapel named for herself to Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. It was said that before the Helen Hills Hills Chapel was built, Mrs. Hills considered having it modeled after our Falmouth church. However, after the chapel was constructed, it was said to have been modeled after two Connecticut Congregational churches. It's also said that Mrs. Hills wanted a copy of our church's Paul Revere bell placed in that Smith College chapel.<sup>22</sup> Based on photographs, it seems that the chandelier in our church and the chandelier in that chapel are similar.<sup>23</sup>

### James M. Hills Hall Added To Our Church: 1958



Our 1958 addition

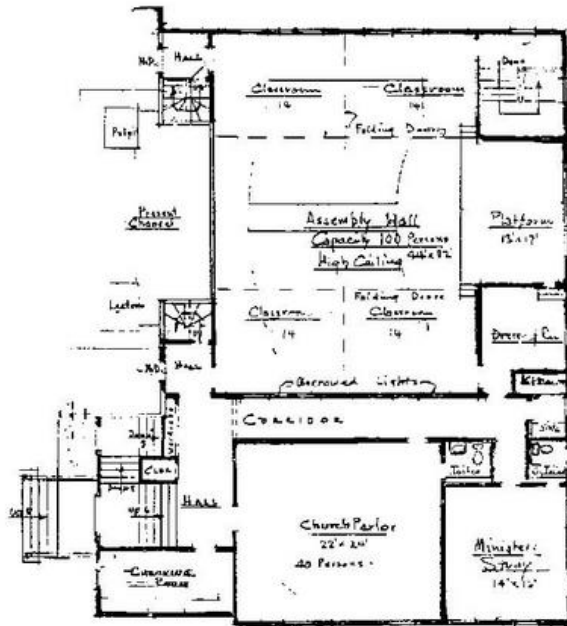
In 1958, at the time of our church's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a new addition for Christian education was attached to the back wall of our sanctuary building at a total cost of \$136,000.<sup>24</sup> Major donor Helen Hills Hills named that addition in memory of her then-deceased husband. In those so-called "baby boom" years, many churches like ours expanded their facilities to have more space for Christian education.<sup>(25)</sup>

This addition necessitated the installation of four doors in the end wall of our sanctuary to allow passage to the addition from the sanctuary's main floor and balcony. To make room for those new doors in the balcony, the pews abutting the old walls were shortened and repositioned. Some of that 1958 addition was built very close to the church's

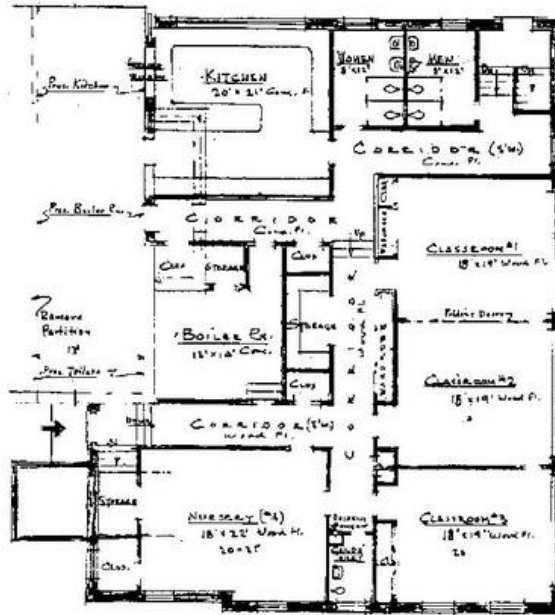


property line at that time.

# TENTATIVE FLOOR PLANS OF OUR PROPOSED NEW CHURCH SCHOOL



FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
Scale:  $\frac{1}{4}" = 1' - 0"$



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN  
Scale:  $\frac{1}{4}" = 1' - 0"$

Diagrams from the fund raising booklet for the 1958 addition



1958 addition behind sanctuary



Main Street entry to 1958 addition

## Our Church's Sanctuary Remodeled: 1960–61

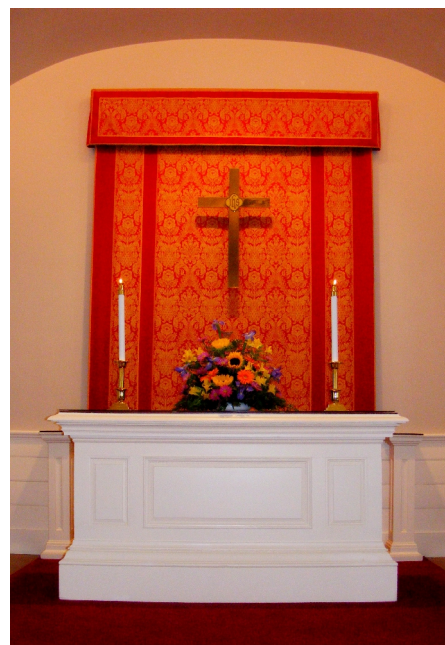
In 1961, additional changes were made to our sanctuary. In that remodeling, the tin ceiling was removed, except for the medallion in its center above the chandelier. A new plaster ceiling with cove and molding and new plaster walls [except the north wall] were installed. Oak flooring was placed on the sanctuary floor, and cork tiles were put on the pew floors. Both were likely laid over existing flooring. That had the effect of decreasing the pew seat height slightly. A new cross, this one attached to the chancel wall behind the altar-table, was given as a memorial gift.<sup>26</sup> A “new center arch and chancel carpeting” were installed, and lighting was renovated.<sup>27</sup> Our church voted to accept a \$25,000 gift from a foundation to help fund this project. That foundation wished to remain anonymous.<sup>28</sup>

At this time, it was reported that for \$1,000, our sanctuary could be restored to its pre-1943 condition, when it had a central pulpit. However, our church did not vote to do that.<sup>29</sup> The actual overall cost of this project appears to have been about \$27,000 or more.<sup>30</sup> Our sanctuary was rededicated at a worship service on January 22, 1961. Dr. Roy Pearson, Dean of Andover Newton Theological School, was the guest preacher. His theme was “The People of God.” The scripture was I Peter 2:1–10.<sup>31</sup>

In 1961, Katharine Lee Bates Road was extended, which took up “a large portion of the parsonage grounds” at 143 Palmer Avenue.<sup>32</sup>



The Manse



Our present altar-table and cross

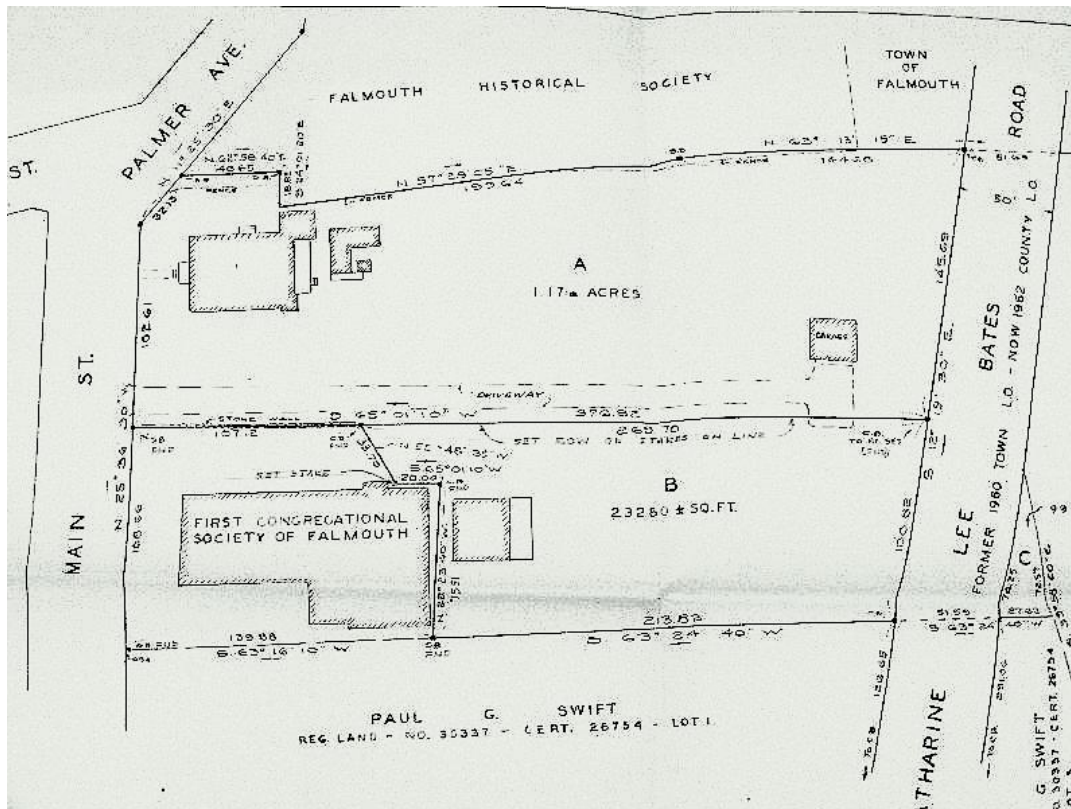
On December 12, 1961, thirteen men in our church agreed to take immediate steps to purchase the Chute house at 54 Main Street beside the church, which was up for sale. They did that “to hold the Chute property for our church.” On February 1, 1962, our congregation thanked those members and voted unanimously to purchase the Chute house.<sup>33</sup> It was then used for church functions. That house was built in 1814 by Captain William Bodfish.

A fascinating story about that house is told by Theodate Geoffrey in his book, *Suckanesset: Wherein May Be Read A History of*



*Falmouth, Massachusetts.* The gist of that story is that Bodfish's first wife died in 1815, the year after the house was built, leaving him with two young children. The next year, while on a sea voyage, Bodfish sent a letter ahead to Captain William Davis in Falmouth, saying that his ship would soon be stopping by Falmouth briefly before crossing the Atlantic with a cargo of oil for Bremen. During that stop, Bodfish planned to marry Mary Crosby, who lived on the other side of Falmouth's Village Green. In the letter, Bodfish asked Davis to watch for his ship when it came and to have a horse and carriage ready for him once Bodfish was rowed ashore.

That time came in the afternoon on December 1, 1816. Finely dressed in a broadcloth coat and top hat, Bodfish arrived in that carriage at Mary's home, where the wedding was ready to take place. There he found that the bride was in her gown, family and guests were assembled, and the wedding supper was nearly ready. However, our church's minister, Rev. Henry Lincoln, who was to perform their marriage ceremony, was nowhere to be found. Rev. Lincoln had been called away on another pastoral duty. The hours passed. Presumably, the dinner was held off as long as possible but then eaten while waiting for the minister. Finally, Rev. Lincoln did show up, and the couple was married about ten o'clock that night! At that point, the tides were turning, and Bodfish's ship needed to leave. So Captain Bodfish hurriedly drove his new wife halfway around the Village Green to her new home, kissed her, then headed back to his ship to make the voyage to Bremen. Certainly, that was one of the shortest honeymoons on record.<sup>34</sup> Church records indicate that Rev. Lincoln conducted three weddings that day.<sup>35</sup>



1962 map of properties

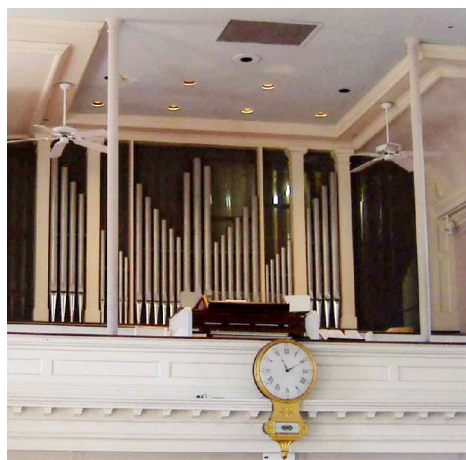


In 1962, the vestibule of our church was renovated to go along with our renewed sanctuary.<sup>36</sup>

In 1968, our church voted to make the Chute house its new parsonage, called the “Manse.”<sup>37</sup> That same year, our church completed the sale of its parsonage at 143 Palmer Avenue for \$26,250.<sup>38</sup>

In 1973, our church was given forty-six White Chapel handbells made in London, England, and originally purchased in 1945.<sup>39</sup> This was said to be the only set of English handbells on the Cape at the time. Three groups of “Paul Revere Ringers” were then formed to play them.<sup>40</sup>

At our worship service on January 20, 1974, the \$85,000 mortgage for the purchase and subsequent renovation of the Chute house in 1968 was burned after having been paid in full.<sup>41</sup>



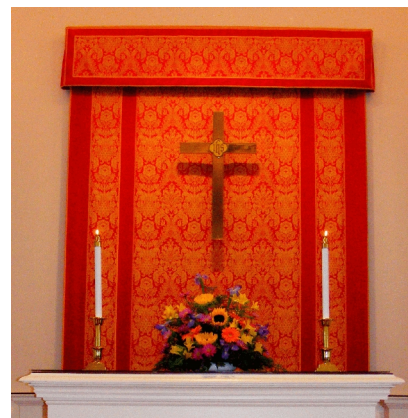
Our Austin pipe organ

On September 21, 1975, our church dedicated a new Austin Pipe Organ, which was installed in our church’s balcony. It is Opus No. 2587 of Austin Organs, Inc. of Hartford, Connecticut. That brought to completion a project initiated in 1964 or earlier to replace the current electric organ with a pipe organ.<sup>42</sup>

In 1976, after being debated at church meetings, our church finally voted to buy the McMurtre property, which lay behind our church and around our church’s western back corner. That property consisted of 23,280 square feet—see the 1962 map on the previous page.<sup>43</sup> The house on that property was moved from there once our church purchased it. Had that property not been purchased, our church would not have been enabled years later to build its current septic system or the Faxon Christian Education Center, both of which were constructed on that former McMurtre land.

A new memorial Dossal secured by the Women’s Union was dedicated in 1980. It is said that the red symbolizes the broken body and shed blood of Jesus. The Trinity is symbolized by the three main divisions of the Dossal. The canopy signifies God’s divine protection.<sup>44</sup>

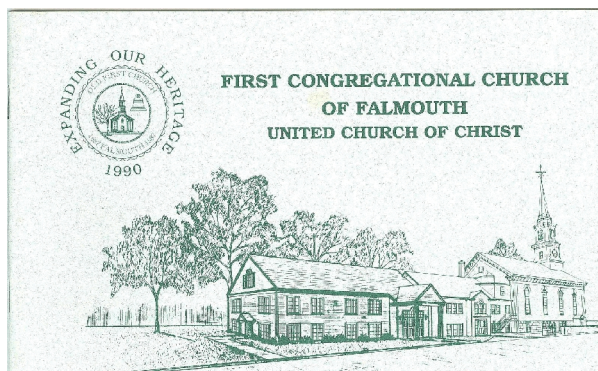
In 1987, our church had a year-long Tricentennial celebration with numerous special events. That anniversary was based on the setting aside of land in 1687 for a minister to serve our community—an event that preceded the actual gathering of our church as an independent body in 1708.<sup>45</sup>



Our Westminster Brocade Dossal

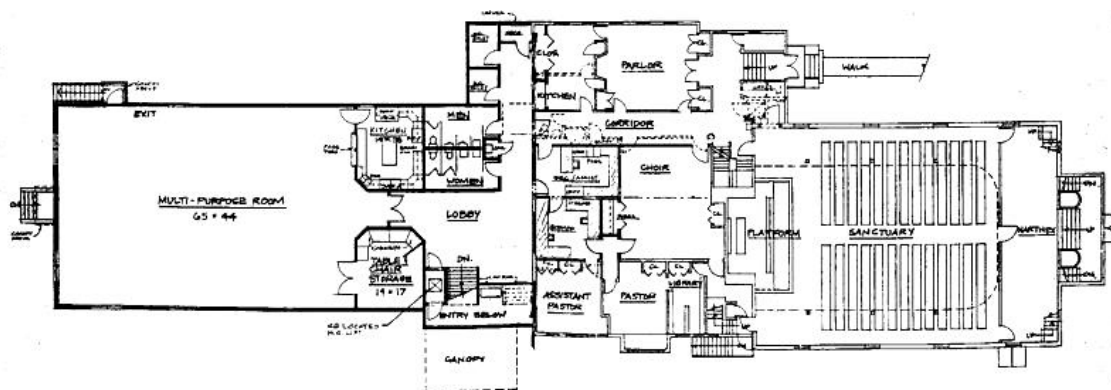
### Constance and Raymond Faxon Christian Education Center Addition: 1990–1992

In 1992, the Constance and Raymond Faxon Christian Education Center was added to our church. That project was initiated by an initial grant of almost \$250,000 from parishioner Raymond Faxon. Overall, it cost nearly \$800,000.

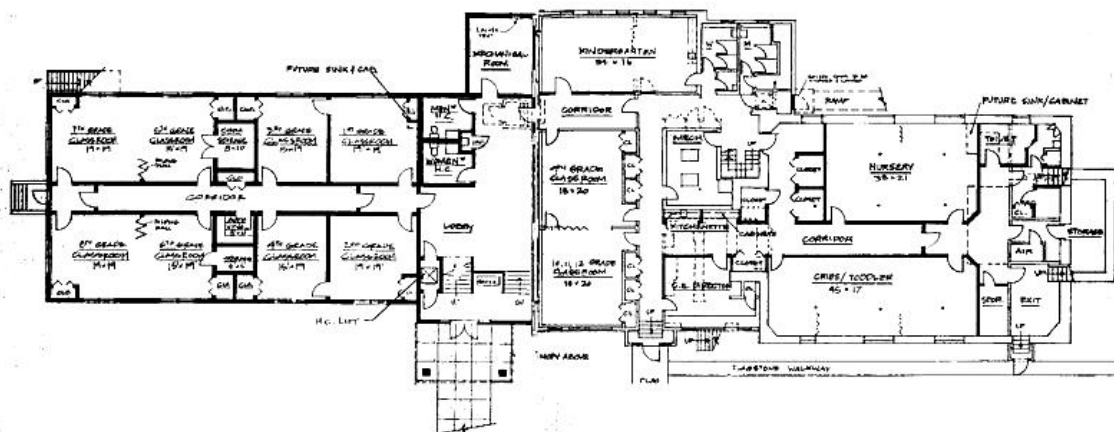


Our 1990 capital campaign booklet, which contains the diagrams below

After a three-year capital fund drive developed with the help of a United Church of Christ fund-raising specialist, that project was ultimately funded approximately equally by contributions from Ray and his wife, Connie Faxon, and by contributions from members and friends of our congregation. That addition has a 5,000-square-foot footprint and was built without a mortgage.<sup>46</sup> The ground-breaking for its construction took place on Pentecost Sunday, May 19, 1991.



Plan for upper level of our church with 1992 addition



Plan for lower level of our church with 1992 addition



On August 19, 1991, Hurricane Bob devastated the upper level and roof of the addition while it was still in a raw state of construction. A photo of that damage can be seen in Chapter 7 – Our Church's Clergy: 1960–2011 in this book. Fortunately, with the help of UCC insurance and the church's building contractor, we were able to complete the Constance and Raymond Faxon Christian Education Center project fully. That center was dedicated in worship on April 5, 1992.



Portico entry, Faxon addition

After the death of Connie Faxon in 1994, our church learned that it had been named in her will to receive two bequests. Those bequests ultimately totaled over \$2.4 million. One bequest was used to provide a Steinway grand piano for our church's sanctuary and to complete the funding for the purchase of an elevator for our Faxon addition. The other, much larger bequest was invested for the benefit of the church.<sup>47</sup>



Our present Communion table

**THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
of the United Church of Christ**

REV. DOUGLAS K. SHOWALTER, MINISTER  
ELLIE NOYES, ASSISTANT TO THE MINISTER  
REV. KAYE HULT, MINISTER TO SINGLE ADULTS  
JANET AINSWORTH, STUDENT MINISTER  
PAT CREWS, INTERIM ORGANIST AND CHOIR DIRECTOR  
HAROLD HEEREMANS, ORGANIST AND  
CHOIR DIRECTOR EMERITUS  
LIN WHITEHEAD, JUNIOR CHOIR DIRECTOR

Sunday, April 5, 1992

**DEDICATION SUNDAY**

"It is by FAITH that the people of God venture forward to fulfill the call of God in their lives. And so it has been in our Church through the three hundred years of its rich history. By dramatic steps of faith, successive generations of this congregation have ventured forth to expand their building, inspired by the vision that their building must serve--not hinder--their church's growing potential for ministry in Christ's name."  
"Expanding Our Heritage--1990"

ORGAN PRELUDE "We Would Be Building" -Sibelius  
MOMENT OF GREETING AND CONCERNS

PRESENTATION OF OUR CHURCH'S WIDER MISSION (UCC)  
CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

\*HYMN No.260 "The Church's One Foundation"

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Minister: Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.

People: According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it.

Minister: Each builder must choose with care how to build on it.

People: For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.



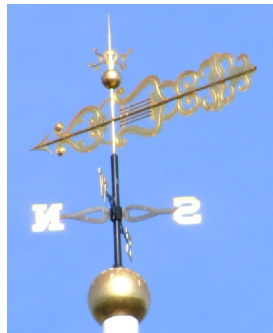
In 1993, a parishioner made and gave to our church, as a gift, a new Communion table to facilitate our serving Holy Communion from the main floor of our sanctuary, so that sacrament could be served on the same level as and closer to our parishioners who are in their pews.<sup>48</sup>

In 2004, an attractive patio was created beside our church's portico entrance with gifts given in memory of the parishioner who first envisioned such an addition to our church.<sup>49</sup>

In 2004, our church's old weathervane was retired and placed on display at the inside entrance of the portico. An exact replica of it was made and placed on the church's steeple.<sup>50</sup>



Portico patio



Our new vane



Our old weathervane

### Our Church's Sanctuary Refreshed: 2008

In 2008, our church celebrated its 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary since it was gathered as an independent congregation in 1708. As part of that celebration, our sanctuary and narthex were completely repaired and painted. The sanctuary floor was refinished. All pews were repainted, and new seat backs and cushions were installed. New pew racks with the unique idea of religious inscriptions on their undersides were installed.<sup>51</sup>



Accessible seating

A space was made for wheel chairs in the front pew on both sides of our sanctuary. Also, the electrical and lighting systems were upgraded, the sanctuary wall clock was repaired, and our kitchen was remodeled and upgraded, among other improvements.



Mirror image on an inscription under a pew book rack

A rededication service for our renewed sanctuary was held on Sunday, March 2, 2008. The scripture was Psalm 84, which begins, "How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts!" And Rev. Dr. Showalter preached on this theme: "Oh, If These Pews Could Speak . . ."



*If only these pews could speak, I'm sure they could tell us about thousands of people over the years who came into this very house of worship, who sat down in these very pews, and who discovered, through the sharing of word, sacrament, music, and Christian fellowship, that the presence and inspiration of God, were right here, in this place, for them . . . May God's blessing always be upon our congregation, and upon our congregation's use of this fine sanctuary, in God's love and service.*

That rededication service was concluded with the congregation singing Katharine Lee Bates' hymn, "Our Church." She created that hymn for our church's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1908.

On Sunday, June 15, 2008, a monument commemorating the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our church was dedicated.<sup>52</sup> That monument is in front of our church and faces the Village Green. It was given to us by members of our church. As the plaque embedded in that monument states:

Commemorating the  
THREE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY  
Gathering of the  
First Congregational Church  
Falmouth  
October 28, 1708 – October 28, 2008



Our church's 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary service was held on October 26, 2008. At that time, our congregation solemnly renewed the Covenant of our church. Our guest preacher was Rev. Dr. James Antal, the Minister and President of our Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ. Dr. Antal preached on the theme "Celebrating, Standing Together, and Making a Difference. The scriptures were I Corinthians 2:6–9 and Matthew 13:34–35, 44.<sup>53</sup> Rev. Dale Hempen, our Associate Conference Minister of the Southeast Area of the Massachusetts Conference, gave the pastoral prayer. For more information on that service, which concluded our year-long 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, see Appendix IX – 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sunday: October 26, 2008 in this book.



## ENDNOTES

1. *FCC4*, September 7, 1900 meeting, 107. It is possible our church used individual Communion cups before this year, but I have not found a record indicating that. *FCC4*, January 4, 1901, 115.
2. Rev. Charles H. Washburn, "Historical Address Covering the 200 Years History of the First Congregational Church in Falmouth, Mass.," *Two Hundredth Anniversary, 1708–1908, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts, October 11, 12, and 13, 1908* (1908), 28.
3. It is known that H. H. Gifford bought pew No. 13 in 1905; he appears in this chart at that pew. *A Record of the Proceedings of the Committee of the First Congregational Society in Falmouth, Massachusetts chosen May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1824, agreeable to an Act passed the 7<sup>th</sup> of Feby preceding entitled "An Act enabling the First Congregational Society in the Town of Falmouth to dispose of certain Real Estate,"* 23.
4. *FCC4*, Resolutions on the Death of Dea. Samuel B. Capen, 194.
5. The picture of Samuel Billings Capen is from Chauncy J. Hawkins, *Samuel Billings Capen: His Life and Work* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1914). It is in the public domain.
6. *FCC4*, May 10, 1908 meeting, 164.
7. This is based on a note, marked 1911, found in the archives of *The Falmouth Enterprise*, which stated: *The First Congregational church is receiving a coat of white paint. This color is most appropriate for a New England church of this description—the white meeting house and the Village Green. Lumbert and Bowman are doing the work.* [Archive Envelope: First Congregational Church (General) 184\_ thru 1959] The 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary publication of the church from 1908 has a picture on its cover showing the church with two colors of paint, apparently white and brown.
8. As noted in our local newspaper, "The First Congregational Church was wired this week for electric lights work done by the Eastern Electric Co." *The Enterprise*, Saturday, March 11, 1911, Vol. XVI, No. 49.
9. *FCC4*, November 8, 1911 meeting, 175.
10. *First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts of the United Church of Christ, Constitution and Bylaws, Article II Character, Section 2–Faith*, 2.
11. *FCC5*, July 2, 1919 meeting, 82.
12. *FCS3*, January 20, 1926 meeting, 193–199. In the year 1926, the society finally dropped the position of Assessor from its by-laws. I assume that position was dropped because, in that year, there were no longer pew sales or even pew rentals for an assessor to assess.

13. FCC5, January 20, 1943 meeting, 195, and insert on 199. The Church Council reported that it had approved the “redecorating” of the church. The Council also reported that to get a larger expression of opinion, the Council called a meeting of church members on September 27, 1942, who voted 21 in favor of the project and 3 in opposition to it.

14. The photograph of our church’s chancel in 1958 is from Margaret G. Long, *The Treasured Heritage of The First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts, 1708–1958*, 21.

15. FCC5, January 19, 1944 meeting, Report on Redecoration of the Church, 203.

16. The 1943 worship bulletin for the rededication of our sanctuary expressed appreciation “to Mrs. James M. Hills, whose kindly and generous interest initiated the impulse and effort that have made possible this renewed sanctuary.” *Rededication Service*, May 23, 1943.

Mrs. Helen Margaret Hills gave cloth to re-upholster the pew cushions on the condition that women in the church would make them, which they did. Then the rest of the sanctuary restoration project grew from that beginning, with Mr. and Mrs. Hills being major contributors to that congregation-wide effort. As Rev. Ralph Long, the minister of that time, said,

*It was just like the man who brought his wife a present of a geranium pot . . . When she put the new flowerpot on the table, she had to have a new table cover, then a new table, and it wasn’t long before he had bought her a new house.*

“One Gift Grows to Church Renovation: Old Chancel Is Restored,” *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, March 19, 1943.

17. Rev. Ralph Long wrote:

*The Cross is the symbol of the greater Church of Christ throughout the world of which we are a part. The medallion at the center of the Cross is an ancient symbol of the Holy Trinity and therefore represents Congregationalism in its three aspects, Faith in God, Fellowship of Christ, Freedom in the Spirit.*

*Rededication Service*, May 23, 1943, Worship Bulletin, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts.

Rev. Dr. Douglas Horton gave a major address on August 13, 1940, at the meeting of the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches of the United States in Berkeley, California. Horton was then the Minister of that General Council. As Horton said in that address, the medallion of the Trinity, fixed at the center of the cross [an ancient Christian image],

*so perfectly symbolizes Congregationalism that the suggestion has been made that we employ it at this Council and perhaps subsequently as the sign of Congregationalism . . . If we stand for faith, fellowship, and freedom, our task is laid out for us.*

*Congregationalism is a force which must express itself in these three ways, and in these connections, Congregationalism has a responsibility on the one hand toward itself and on the other toward the outside world.*

Horton also made the point that just as no one aspect of God symbolized in the Trinity obscures the other two aspects of God symbolized in it, Congregationalists should make certain that their faith “does not turn into that in-looking variety which denies fellowship and travesties freedom.” Douglas Horton, “Toward An Understanding of Congregationalism: A Preface to the Council”



*Minutes, Fifth Regular Meeting, Berkeley, California, August 13–20, 1940*, General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches of the United States, Appendix A, 59.

18. FCC5, January 19, 1944 meeting, Report on Redecoration of the Church, 203.

19. “One Gift Grows to Church Renovation: Old Chancel Is Restored,” *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, March 19, 1943.

20. “Servicemen Listed in Church Shrine: First Congregational Church compiles Records of parish Men in Armed Forces,” *Falmouth Enterprise*, November 10, 1943.

21. Given by Mr. and Mrs. Cedric Hadley in memory of their son John.

22. Mrs. Hills’ Smith College chapel was said to have been designed from Connecticut’s Old Lyme and Norwalk Congregational churches. *Congregational Christian Journal*, April 6, 1955.

23. Email correspondence with Deborah A. Richards, Archives Specialist, Smith College Archives, Northampton, MA, and Charlene Meader Moran, Lead Administrative Assistant, Office of the Chaplains, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts (3/13/2007, 3/16/2007).

24. As stated in the fund-raising booklet printed for this project:

*The Wells Organization was, therefore, engaged to lead us in providing the ways and means to match the new day. The chief concern now is for adequate facilities of the Church School program . . .*

*—Every Nook and Corner Is Filled.*

*The 7<sup>th</sup> graders are tucked away in the kitchen off the vestry because of lack of space and adequate facilities.*

*You’ll find the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades hidden away in the choir loft again because the vestry is full, as are all adjacent rooms.*

*The First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts, 1708–1957.*

Ernest Sterling, a son-in-law of Rev. Charles Washburn who was a former minister of our church, served as the architect of the project, donating half his usual fee back to the church.

First Congregational Building Committee, May 7, 1959 meeting at the home of Arnold W. Dyer.

The total cost of the project was \$136,000. The fund-raising campaign brought in \$62,000 in pledges to be paid over three years. \$30,000 was also pledged by Mrs. Helen H. Hills in memory of her late husband. A mortgage was also held by Wareham Bank. Events connected with the dedication of that new addition included an historical pageant and “a beautiful candle-light parade around the Village Green, during which organ music was broadcast.”

*Report of the Building Committee*, January 21, 1959.

25. The photograph of our church’s new addition in 1958 is from Margaret G. Long, *The Treasured Heritage of The First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts, 1708–1958*, 28.

26. This cross was given in loving memory of Lieutenant George William Tow by his parents, Col. William and Marion Tow. The cross bears the initials IHS, an ancient monogram that signifies the first three letters of Jesus' name in Greek.

27. *FCC6*, August 8, 1960 special meeting, 291. The vote to proceed with the project was unanimous.

28. *FCC6*, May 5, 1960 special meeting, 290. Also, a letter from the Executive Director of that foundation is in our church's archives.

29. *FCC6*, October 11, 1960 special meeting, 293.

30. Unable to find a direct statement in church records as to the actual total cost of this project, I arrived at the figure "about \$27,000 or more" from the following sources:

Contract October 19, 1960—Agreement to pay A. Charles Foley, Contractor, \$22,463.00 to furnish all materials and labor to complete the work.

*FCC6*, October 11, 1960 special meeting, 292–293. The following additional expenses were approved: added plaster walls, about \$2,000; steeple repair after a hurricane, \$2,500 at most.

31. *Program of Rededication*, The First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts, Sunday, January 22, 1961.

32. Church Council Report, *Annual Reports for 1960, First Congregational Church of Falmouth*, 12. Also, in a letter dated November 17, 1960, the Falmouth Board of Selectmen informed our church that the town was beginning to construct the road that would extend Katharine Lee Bates Road to Palmer Avenue.

33. *FCC7*, February 1, 1962, adjourned annual meeting, 216–217. The purchase price was \$45,000. Sixty-five members present voted unanimously for the purchase.

34. Theodate Geoffrey, *Suckanesset: Wherein May Be Read, A History of Falmouth, Massachusetts* (Falmouth, MA: The Falmouth Publishing Co, Inc., 1930), 92–93.

35. On December 1, 1816, Rev. Lincoln conducted the marriage services of Mr. Crocker Davis and Mrs. Apphia F. Hinckley, Mr. William Bodfish and Miss Mary Crocker, and Mr. Isaiah Lewis and Miss Betsey Fish. *FCC2*, 88.

36. Church Council Report, *Annual Reports for 1962, First Congregational Church of Falmouth of the UCC*, January 17, 1963, 3.

37. *FCC7*, July 22, 1968, 240.

38. *FCC7*, June 1, 1967 meeting and October 9, 1967 meeting, 233–235. The sale price of the Palmer Avenue parsonage was noted at the church's October 26, 1967 meeting, 235. However, a

law suit contesting a town-granted zoning variance related to that sale held the completion of that sale up until 1968. Board of Trustees Report, *Annual Reports For Year Ending 1968, First Congregational Church of the UCC*, January 23, 1969, 35.

39. The handbells were given in memory of Deane R. Walker by the Walker family and friends.

40. Music Committee Report, *Annual Reports for 1973, First Congregational Church of Falmouth of the UCC*, January 20, 1974, 19; *Service of Dedication*, March 19, 1972.

41. January 20, 1974 Worship Service Order, *Annual Reports for 1973, First Congregational Church of Falmouth of the UCC*, January 20, 1974, 1; therein see also the Board of Trustees Report, 11.

42. The Organ Fund Committee reported that their overall expenses for the project were somewhat over \$56,000. Organ Fund Committee Report, *Annual Report for Year Ending 1975, First Congregational Church of Falmouth, MA of the UCC*, January 29, 1976, 18. FCC7 January 21, 1965 annual meeting, 223.

43. FCC8, October 28, 1976 meeting, 197. The price of the McMurtre land purchase was \$33,000 plus closing costs.

44. This Dossal was dedicated on March 2, 1980, in memory of Marie Barry. It was secured by the Women's Union from C. M. Almy Son, Inc., with help from parishioner and architect Barbara Woll Jones. The Dossal cloth is a red Westminster Brocade.

Pam Pratt, notes on Marie Barry Memorial Dossal; Women's Union Report, *Annual Report for Year Ending 1980, First Congregational Church of Falmouth, MA of the UCC*, January 25, 1981, 27.

45. *Proprietor Record, 1661–1895, Town of Falmouth*, 25.

46. FCC10, September 17, 1989, 246. 118 members voted in favor of moving forward with the project; 17 voted against it. That percent of about 87% in favor was deemed sufficient to proceed. However, from that point on, efforts were made to be sensitive to and not alienate, the small percentage of members who had doubts about the project.

Building Fund Group Report, Annual Report, January –December 31, 1991, *First Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ, Village Green, Falmouth, Massachusetts*, 13.

Building Fund Group Report, Annual Report, January 1–December 31, 1992, *First Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ, Village Green, Falmouth, Massachusetts*, 19.

47. Moderator/Church Council Report, Annual Report, January 1–December 31, 1995, *First Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ, Village Green, Falmouth, Massachusetts* 1; therein also see the Report of the Finance Committee and The Constance B. Faxon Memorial and Christian Education Building Fund, 30. The so-named Memorial Fund was the large fund left

as a portion of the residue of Connie's estate. The first of two installments from it was received in 1995. The so-named Building Fund was a bequest of \$100,000 that Connie also left to the church, which was used to fund the grand piano and help fund the elevator.

Report of the Finance Committee and The Constance B. Faxon Investment Fund, Annual Report, January 1–December 31, 1996, *First Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ, Village Green, Falmouth, Massachusetts*, 32. As reported, the Memorial Fund Balance as of 12/31/96, including the second and final installment of the bequest in 1996, distributions, and gains, was \$2,643,894.

48. Our Communion table was built by F. Thomas Haynes and given by him and his wife, Dorothy Swift Haynes, in memory of their parents.

49. Built with gifts in memory of Arthur Young.

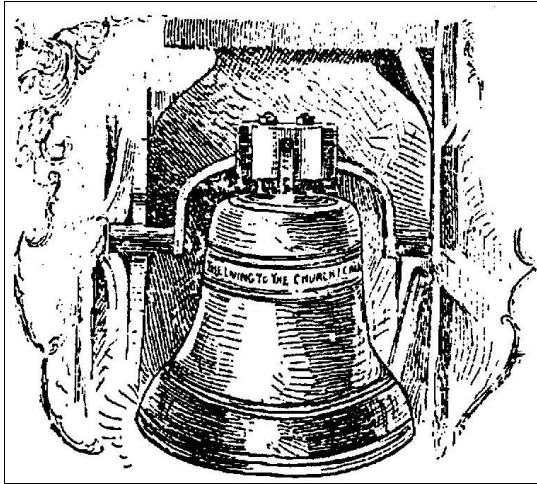
50. Our old weathervane has seen a lot of weather, including numerous hurricanes. It was reported in 1912 that "the strong wind of last Thursday bent the weather vane on the steeple of First Congregational Church." *The Enterprise*, Saturday, February 24, 1912, Vol., XVII, No. 46.

51. This was the idea and work of Walter A. Slaboden II, who built the pew racks and described that project in his article "The Story of the Pew Racks" in the church's archives.

52. This monument was given by Richard and Betty Baker.

53. 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1708–2008, Worship Bulletin, Covenant Renewal Sunday, October 26, 2008.

## Chapter 20 – Our Paul Revere Bell



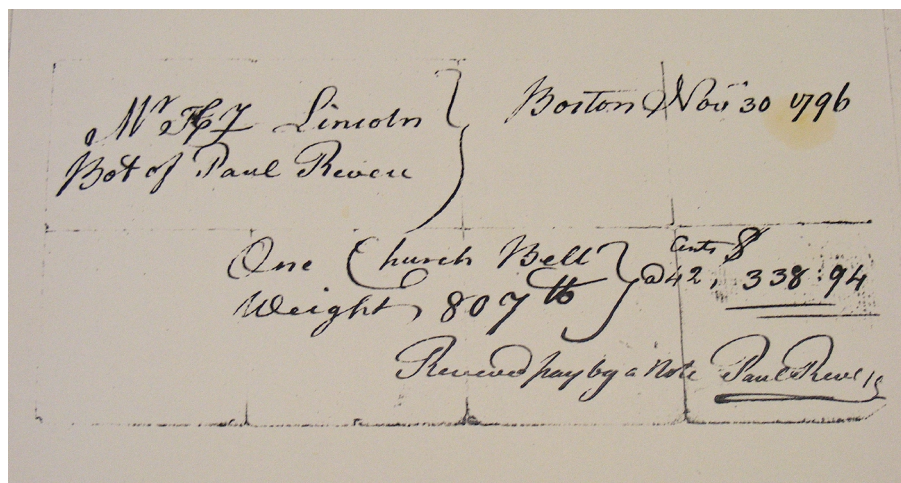
Our Paul Revere bell

On November 30, 1796, a church bell was purchased from Paul Revere for the First Congregational Society's new church building constructed on the Village Green that year.<sup>(1)</sup> The receipt for that purchase, signed by Revere and made out to Mr. H. J. Lincoln, our church's minister at the time, has been in the possession of the Falmouth Historical Society for safekeeping since 1900.<sup>2</sup>

The 1796 church on the Village Green seems to have had an open belfry, which exposed the bell to the elements.<sup>3</sup> However, in 1857, when the church was moved to its present location across from the Green and remodeled, the bell was

installed in the newly constructed tower, where it remains today, somewhat sheltered from the weather by louvers.

Our Revere bell weighs 807 pounds and cost \$338.94.<sup>4</sup> It bears the raised letter inscription, "THE LIVING TO THE CHURCH I CALL, AND TO THE GRAVE I SUMMON ALL." That is a Puritan saying, which Paul Revere included on some of his church bells. This bell also bears the inscription REVERE, BOSTON 1796, though it is mostly eroded now due to exposure to the elements. That inscription can be detected if a flashlight is shown on it. Overall, the bell is 30.5 inches tall and 33 inches wide.<sup>5</sup>



Copy of receipt for purchase of our Revere church bell,  
signed by Paul Revere

*Courtesy of Falmouth Historical Society*

According to Revere bell researchers Edward and Evelyn Stickney of Bedford, Massachusetts, Revere created his first church bell in 1792 to replace the cracked bell in the Second Church in Boston. That was the first church bell made in America. Previously, American churches had secured their bells from England. From 1792 to 1828, the Revere foundry created more than 950 bells, weighing from a few pounds to 2943 pounds. Nearly half of those bells were church bells. As noted in Revere's *Price of Bells*, Revere himself considered any bell weighing over 300 pounds to be a church bell. In contrast to our Falmouth bell, the Revere bell at King's Chapel in Boston weighs 2437 pounds. Paul Revere ended his partnership in the foundry in 1811. The foundry was then run by other Revere family members.<sup>(6)</sup>



**PAUL REVERE & CO.**

At their Foundry,  
No. 3, BATTERY-MARCH STREET,  
Near Commercial Coffee House, Boston,  
Manufacture Composition Bolts, Spikes, Nails, Cap-  
stern Rims and all other kinds of ship work at the  
shortest notice.

Also, at their Manufactory in Braintree,  
All kinds and sizes of Church and Chime, Ship and  
Academy Bells.—Also, Copper Bolts, of all sizes, Sheet  
Copper, and Brazier's Copper, all of which they will  
warrant equal to any manufactured in this, or any other  
country.

All kinds of Brass Machinery, Castings, Cylinders,  
&c. for manufactories, done at short notice, and on the  
most liberal terms.

Revere bells, *Boston Directory*, 1823

As of 1976, the Stickneys had found upwards of 30 Paul Revere church bells created by 1811 that were still in use. The oldest of those bells was the 695-pound bell created by Revere in 1795, which now hangs in the Congregational Church in Groveland, Massachusetts.<sup>7</sup>

In 1798, Paul Revere recorded his formula for creating the molds into which molten metal was poured to form bells. As he wrote:

*The mud for the thickness of Bell, one part horse dung, one sand, and one part clay. For nowel and cope, 6 parts horse dung, 4 sand, 4 clay and some cow horn.*<sup>8</sup>

According to the Stickneys, historians have thought that Revere's bells were composed of 75% copper and 25% tin. The Stickneys found that lab-tested fragments from a destroyed Paul Revere bell in Maine were very close to that formulation. They contained 77% copper, 21% tin, and "a trace of silver," perhaps to give the bell a better tone. Those fragments also contained small amounts of lead, arsenic, nickel, and silicon, which were likely just impurities in the copper that was used.<sup>9</sup>

In the present day, our Revere bell is automatically struck on the hour and on the half hour by a hammer. It is also used for worship services and other important events. Due to concerns about its mounting, it is no longer tolled using a bell rope. Rather, a remote device is used to activate a hammer that strikes it. As the late John Newton, a long-time Sexton of our church, observed,

*You can't hear the bell inside [the church] . . . You can, faintly, if it's real quiet, but not when the church is full. You have to listen very carefully.*<sup>10</sup>

Our church celebrated the centennial of our Paul Revere Bell on April 19 and 20, 1896.



Katharine Lee Bates

The sanctuary, then called the audience room, was decorated, and flags flew from the church's tower and front.<sup>11</sup> During the festivities, Longfellow's poem entitled *Paul Revere's Ride* was read.

Also, a new poem specially written for the occasion by Katharine Lee Bates<sup>(12)</sup> was read. Now famous, that poem was entitled, *The Falmouth Bell*.<sup>13</sup>

### ***The Falmouth Bell***

#### ***I***

*Never was there lovelier town  
Than our Falmouth by the sea  
Tender curves of sky look down  
On her grace of knoll and lea.  
Sweet her shy arbutus blows  
Ere from prouder haunts the spring  
Scarcely yet has brushed the snows  
With a violet colored wing.  
Bright the autumn gleams pervade  
Cranberry marsh and bushy wold,  
Till the children's mirth has made  
Millionaires in leaves of gold,  
And upon her pleasant ways,  
Set with many a garden home,  
Flash through fret of drooping sprays,  
Visions far of ocean foam.*

***Happy bell of Paul Revere,  
Sounding o'er such blest demesne,  
While a hundred times the year  
Weaves the round from green to green.***

#### ***II***

*Never were there friendlier folk  
Than in Falmouth by the sea,  
Neighbor-households that invoke  
Pride of sailor pedigree.  
Here is princely interchange  
Of the gifts of shore and field,  
Starred with treasures rare and strange  
That the liberal sea chests yield.  
Culture here burns breezy torch,*



*Where gray captains, bronzed of neck,  
Tread their little length of porch  
With memory of the deck.  
Ah, and here the tenderest hearts,  
Here where sorrows sorest wring  
And the widows shift their parts,*

***Comforted and comforting.  
Holy bell of Paul Revere,  
Calling such to prayer and praise,  
While a hundred times the year  
Herds her flock of faithful days!***

### ***III***

*Greetings to thee, ancient bell  
Of our Falmouth by the sea!  
Answered by the ocean swell  
Ring thy centuried Jubilee!  
Like the white sails of the Sound,  
Hast thou seen the years drift by,  
From the dreamful, dim profound  
To a goal beyond the eye.  
Long thy maker lieth mute,  
Hero of a faded strife;  
Thou hast tolled from seed to fruit  
Generations three of life  
Still thy mellow voice and clear  
Floats o'er land and listening deep,  
And we deem our fathers hear  
From their shadowy hill of sleep.*

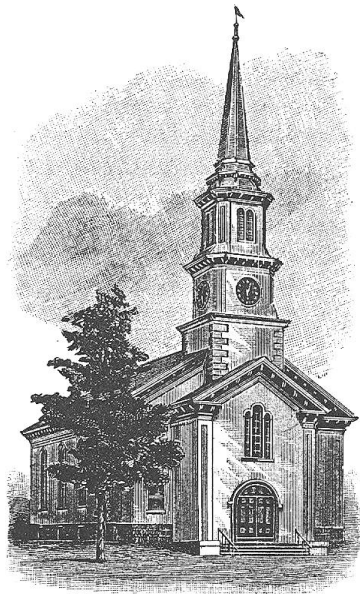
***Ring thy peals for centuries yet,  
Living voice of Paul Revere!  
Let the future not forget  
What the past accounted dear!***

After that poem was read at the celebration, Rev. William E. Barton, noted minister of the Shawmut Congregational Church in Boston, presented the Centennial Address, which the local newspaper subsequently described as “eloquent.”<sup>14</sup> Our Revere bell was rung as Barton brought his oration to a close. As Barton said that day, in part:

*We talk of “civil and religious liberty.” Let me remind you that the order should be*

*reversed. We obtained religious liberty in these Congregational Churches and that caused us to conceive and demand civil liberty. We already had "our church without a bishop" and in it learned to believe in and fight for a "state without a king." Well may this bell cast by the old Son of Liberty hanging in the belfry of a church dedicated to liberty of conscience, a church out of whose womb was born in the fulness of time that which 121 years ago at Lexington burst its swaddling bands, but which today having grown in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man we recognize as our free American Republic. Let every member of this church prize his heritage in its history and no Esau despise his birthright or imagine that a richer ritual or more stately service can compensate for the loss of this incomparable history, this priceless Christian inheritance.<sup>15</sup> (<sup>16</sup>)*

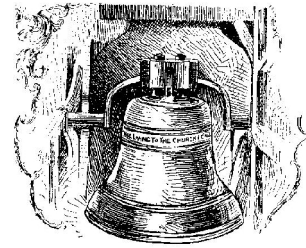
Although our Revere bell is not currently open to public tours due to concerns about people's safety among the old timbers in the steeple, it was a highlight for visits in the past.<sup>(17)</sup> But even then, the journey up to the bell could cause concerns. Rev. Frank Hazen was our church's minister in 1910. In that year the following report was given at a meeting of the Barnstable West District of the Massachusetts Sunday School Association, which was held in our church:



Revere bell in louvered section above our clock

## CENTENNIAL Paul Revere BELL.

HANGING IN BELFRY  
First Congregational Church,  
FALMOUTH, MASS.



Art thou not weary, O eloquent bell,  
Tolling and ringing for many a year?  
Nay it is sweet in the Lord's house to dwell,  
For this I was fashioned by brave  
PAUL REVERE.<sup>8</sup>

SUNDAY AND MONDAY

April 19 and 20, 1896.

<sup>8</sup> Purchased of Paul Revere 1796.

*Intermission followed just before going down to dinner. An invitation was given by Mr. Hazen to all who wished to go up into the belfry tower and see the old bell made by Paul Revere. A goodly number started but we fear not all reached the top. "Was the trembling ladder too steep and tall, or were they afraid of masses and moving shapes of shade? Suffice it to say all got down safely and all did justice to the bountiful collation so hospitably served to us."<sup>18</sup>*

Looking back upon the earlier history of our Revere bell, Margaret G. Long wrote in 1958 that,

*until 50 years ago the bell was tolled when a member of the Church died, it was rung when war was declared, and when peace followed. Also, until 50 years ago the bell*

*was used to arouse the town firemen when there was a fire. Many of the citizens claimed that “the old method of ringing the Congregational Church bell was much more effectual,” as the Paul Revere bell could be heard at a much greater distance than the then (1908) new fire alarm.<sup>19</sup>*

In 1997, Karen Allen noted that,

*Ruth Washburn Sterling in her childhood memories recalled a small red box on the front of the church. In the event of a fire the glass front of the box was broken allowing access to a key to the belfry where the Paul Revere bell could be rung to sound the alarm.<sup>20</sup>*

Apparently that box was placed on our church in 1900.<sup>21</sup>

In 1930 Theodate Geoffrey spoke of our church, saying that,

*The leader of the church choir was accustomed to tune his bass viol to the pitch of the Paul Revere bell, which was originally C sharp, although after it was cracked, the pitch fell to C flat.<sup>22</sup>*

That appears to be an erroneous statement, as there is no evidence that the bell is or ever was cracked.

Our congregation celebrated the Bicentennial of our Paul Revere Bell on Sunday, November 3, 1996. As the minister of our church then, I presented the following sermon to mark the occasion.

## **Our Voice of Christian Good News and Faith**

### **A Sermon**

*When [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. he stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recover of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*  
*[Luke 4:16–18 NRSV]*

This morning, we celebrate the bicentennial of our church's Paul Revere bell. Purchased in 1796, this 807-pound bell is our church's oldest and most enduring treasure. Through 200 years of salt-sea air, blowing Cape Cod sand, hurricanes, and friendly pigeons, the voice of our bell is still ringing out over Falmouth village—every hour of every day and night.

According to my estimates, our Paul Revere bell has rung at least 3½ million times over

the past 200 years. For example:

–The repeated tolling of our bell has summoned the faithful to worship on more than 10,000 Sundays. Can you imagine listening to 10,000 sermons?

–Since 1941, when our bell was mechanized, it has rung 3.1 million times, just to mark the passing of each hour.

–Add to these figures, all the times over 200 years that our church's bell has been tolled for funerals, weddings, church meetings, national celebrations, and to sound the alarm for Falmouth's firemen.

Imagine that! Our bell has rung at least 3½ million times over 200 years! If each of those rings equaled just a single foot in distance, our bell would now have made one full round trip to and back from Philadelphia, the cradle of our nation's liberty. Is there anyone here this morning who doesn't know the story of Paul Revere's famous midnight ride to alert the colonists that "the British are coming!"? I suppose not.<sup>(23)</sup>

Through the years, Paul Revere has become one of the most enduring symbols of our nation's political liberty. But let me expand that to say that Paul Revere is also a symbol of our nation's religious liberty. The fact is that Paul Revere's father was born in France. His French birth name, before being anglicized to Paul Revere, was Apollos Rivoire. Apollos Rivoire was a French Huguenot—a French Protestant. Fleeing intense persecution in France, he came to America to find religious liberty and economic opportunity.

It's very appropriate that our church has a Paul "Rivoire" bell, for, as you may know, one of the earliest ministers in our community was Samuel Shiverick. Shiverick was also a French Huguenot, who is also believed to have come to this country seeking religious freedom. People sometimes forget that John Calvin, the famous Protestant Reformer, was actually French and that Geneva, Switzerland, the great center of the Reformed Protestant movement, is both French-speaking and close to France.

Earlier, I said that this bell is our church's oldest treasure. It might interest you to know that our church had this bell about 140 years before we ever had a cross. Due to Puritan scruples against most religious symbols, the cross is a relative latecomer to Congregationalism. I think the



“The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere”

early 1940s likely marked the first time a cross was used in our church sanctuary.

Large church bells go back a long way in the Christian Church, as far back as the 8th century AD. In those early centuries, churches built towers to hold their bells, and bells were very useful for announcing the time of day because clocks were uncommon.

In those early centuries, church bells were used to call the faithful to worship; to call the living to pray for the souls of the dead as they ascended to God; and to ward off the evil spirits, which, superstition said, were in every approaching thunder and lightning storm. That superstitious belief in the magic of church bells to ward off evil spirits was so strong that church bells were often consecrated through rites that seemed much like baptisms. In those rites, a bishop would wash a bell, dry it with towels, give it the name of a Christian saint, anoint it with holy oils, pray that it would be given power against evil spirits that ride the wind, and consecrate it in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

In Medieval Europe, it was believed that all church bells made a pilgrimage to Rome on Good Friday. Thus, on that day, devout Christians usually stayed indoors so as not to see the bells traveling. In that same period, there were stories about church bells buried underground or sunken in lakes as punishment for human sins. On Christmas Eve and at other sacred times, people claimed to hear those buried bells ringing mysteriously all on their own.

During persecutions in France, not long before the birth of Paul Revere's father, the bell from an outlawed Protestant church was taken down, whipped, buried, dug up again, and forced to recant its Protestantism before it was re-consecrated and hung in a French Roman Catholic church. As you can see, in those bygone centuries, people took their church bells very seriously.

Some church bells are of enormous size. One of the cathedral bells in Canterbury, England, requires 24 people, all pulling at once, to toll it. You've heard of dumbbells that people exercise with. Originally, those were clapper-less bells attached to a pulley and rope, which people pulled up and down just to get in better physical shape. As anyone who has tolled our own Paul Revere Bell knows, it is exercise. The only trick is to remember to let go of the rope each time the moving bell pulls the rope back up through the ceiling. Believe it or not, there have been tragic cases in which people have been killed ringing church bells simply because they forgot to let go of the rope!

I'll tell you an embarrassing story on myself, which indicates how important our church bells are to the communities we live in. My previous church in Belfast, Maine, also has a Paul Revere bell. That church sits right in the middle of the downtown district. One day in 1981, my wife Chris' parents were visiting on a weekday. Spying the thick bell rope that hung down from the balcony ceiling, my father-in-law, quite naturally, wanted to try his hand at ringing it.

Thinking it would do no harm, I told him, "Sure, go ahead!" My father-in-law delighted in tolling the bell about 20 or 30 times. Walking back through the church, I suddenly heard the

phone in my office ringing off the hook. Picking up the receiver, I learned that it was our local newspaper. They had heard our church's Paul Revere Bell ringing repeatedly. They were calling because they figured that somehow we had gotten news before they did that the American hostages then being held in Iran had finally been released. At that moment, my face must have turned a bright shade of scarlet. As I had to confess, "No, I haven't heard anything about a hostage release. It was just my father-in-law fulfilling a childhood ambition." That day, I learned—albeit the hard way!—that the voices of our church bells really do matter to people.

Our church bell tower is not open to the public because the passage is difficult and unprotected. But if you were to go up there, you would see the following words written in different hands, in pencil on an inside wall:

*JUNE 15, 1886—THE BELL RUNG 1 HOUR FOR BICENTENNIAL MORNING. BY SAMUEL H. ROBINSON* [The reference here is to the 200th anniversary of the founding of Falmouth.]

*SKIP SCHOOL AND RUNG BELL FOR ONE HOUR AND A HALF THE DAY ARMISTICE WAS SIGNED, NOVEMBER 1918—W.H. DAVIS BILL JONES* [Of course, that was the end of the first World War.]

*JANUARY 28, 1981—THE BELL RUNG 53 TIMES FOR AMERICANS HELD HOSTAGE BY IRANIAN TERRORISTS AS THANKSGIVING PER ORDER OF PRESIDENT REAGAN*

*JULY 22, 1993 AUGUST 12, 1993 KATHARINE LEE BATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL BELL RUNG 100 TIMES EACH DAY BY DAVID PARKER JR., TRUSTEE*

I thank John Newton, our present Church Sexton, for going up in our bell tower and securing these wonderful remembrances of the voice of our Paul Revere Bell ringing out over our community.

This morning, we celebrate our bell's Bicentennial. Today is a fun day, a day of proud remembrance and thanksgiving. But, to be frank, this is also a day of festivities that will pass away all too quickly. The truth is that our church's Paul Revere Bell is a symbol of many things. For example:

- Our bell is a voice of worship and glory to God, which sounds out over our community.
- Our bell is a voice that witnesses to the good news of Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.
- Our bell is a voice of political freedom and religious freedom!

—Our bell is a voice of prayer and thanksgiving to God in the midst of national crises and in our nation's deliverance from the same.

—Our bell is a voice in the marking of time until God's in-breaking kingdom is fully and finally revealed.

I suggest on this 200th anniversary that, as a congregation and as individual church members, we honor our Paul Revere Bell best when we strive, like our bell, to be a clear and resounding voice in our community through the years. For example:

First, I think we honor our Paul Revere Bell best when we are a voice in our community, which witnesses to the importance of God and religious worship. In fact, our church people are such a voice and witness every time we open our church doors for worship. And every time we genuinely open our hearts to welcome newcomers who would join us in this sacred act.

The gracious hospitality and friendliness of our church to strangers at worship—be it Sunday mornings, funerals, or weddings—is a telling voice and witness, particularly in this age of our society's increasing secularity. Also, we were such a voice, bearing witness to the importance of God and worship, when our church joined with other Falmouth congregations to express our strong concern when a commercial parade was encroaching on Sunday morning.

Second, I think we honor our Paul Revere Bell best when we are a voice and a dependable force for Christian love and service in our community and beyond. As Jesus proclaimed in our scripture reading this morning from the *Gospel According to Luke*:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free.*

Our church is such a voice and force when our church people do such things as:

- walk for the homeless,
- supply food for the Falmouth Service Center, which cares for those in need in our community,
- sponsor a free clothing project for children,
- house Alcoholics Anonymous meetings for a nominal charge, and
- support the ministries and outreach work of our denomination, at home and overseas.

Third, I think we honor our Paul Revere Bell best when we are a resounding voice and example in our community for human dignity and worth and for religious and political freedom.

Our church is such a voice and example when we reach out in friendship to other congregations in our interfaith community, such as when we provided a tree to honor the dedication of Falmouth's first Jewish cemetery.



Our church is such a voice and example,  
 –when we support the right of individuals to hold their own religious and political beliefs, and  
 –when we respect the inherent human dignity of all God's created people, regardless of the human differences that distinguish them from one another.

Yes, today is our Paul Revere Bell's Bicentennial. May it ring for hundreds of more years!  
 And may our church, like our bell, ever strive to be a clear and resounding voice of Christian good news and faith for our community and for our world for centuries to come!

## ENDNOTES

1. The image of our Paul Revere Bell is from the bulletin cover of our church's April 19 and 20, 1896 Centennial celebration of our bell.

2. The *Falmouth Enterprise* of September 8, 1900, reported that,  
*The bill of the Paul Revere bell on the Congregational church was presented to the society by Miss Martha Butler. The secretary was instructed to hire a safe deposit box in the bank to keep this and other valuable papers that have been and may be presented to the society.*

The society referred to here was the Falmouth Historical Society. At this writing, it is not known how Martha Butler came into possession of that bill or where that bill was kept between 1796 and 1900. Some have said that Timothy Crocker offered to purchase a bell for this new 1796 church. However, I have not been able to substantiate that. Crocker was a deacon of our Falmouth church, an active member of the First Congregational Society of Falmouth, and the father-in-law of Rev. Henry Lincoln.

In 1903, Rev. Henry Herbert Smythe noted from Falmouth town records that on October 10, 1796, the First Congregational Society of Falmouth voted that any money raised from the sale of pews for its new meeting house in excess of what was needed to pay for it would be used to purchase a bell. He also noted that at a later Society meeting, in 1797, it was voted "that the overplush money be returned to the purchasers of the pews as they paid for their pews." Smythe went on to say that,

*The explanation of this vote was doubtless to be found in the fact that in the interval between the votes, Capt. Timothy Crocker, the father-on-law of Rev. Henry Lincoln, the young pastor, offered to donate a bell for the use of the Society.*

Rev. Henry Herbert Smythe, *History of the First Congregational Society of Falmouth*, [prepared and compiled from original documents and sources and first printed in *The Falmouth Enterprise*, 1903.] Typescript copy, 1933, in the possession of the Falmouth Library, 37–38.

I have found no indication in Falmouth town records of that period that Timothy Crocker made an offer to provide a bell. Also, Falmouth town records indicate that the later Society meeting that Smythe referred to actually took place on February 6, 1798, not in 1797. It is worth noting that Frederick Freeman, in his 1862 history of Falmouth in *The History of Cape Cod: the Annals of the Thirteen Towns of Barnstable County*, Volume II, says nothing about any offer or

purchase of the bell by Crocker either.

3. Karen Allen, "Ring Out in Honor of Brave Paul Revere," *Spritsail*, Winter 1997, Volume 11, Number 1. 18. Karen was a former Archivist of our Falmouth church who brought to light much information about the history of our church and town.

4. There is a discrepancy about the weight of the Revere bell. The receipt for the bell said that it weighs 807 pounds. However, in his address at the Centennial celebration of the bell, delivered at our Falmouth church in 1896, Rev. William E. Barton made the following comment about it:

*Underneath this old weathercock, which now, covered with gold leaf adorns the Shephard Memorial Church in Cambridge, swings the first bell cast by Paul Revere in 1792. It weighed 912 pounds and is still in existence. After this Paul Revere cast many bells. He left a record of them during the first years of his founding and they number well toward a hundred. How many he cast later cannot be know. This present bell [in Falmouth] was the sixteenth bell which he made and I found a complete record of it in his own books, still preserved, and on his record is said to weigh 821 pounds. These bells are all good bells, and a number are still in existence, though some have needlessly been destroyed. . .*

"1796–1896, Centennial Paul Revere Bell, Stirring Address by Rev. Wm. E. Barton, D.D., of Shawmut Church, Boston," *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, April 25, 1896.

In their research of Paul Revere bells, Edward and Evelyn Stickney note the same finding in Revere stockbooks and ledgers, namely, that "A Revere bell weighing 821 lbs was sold in 1796 to *The Town of Falmouth*." Edward and Evelyn Stickney, *The Bells of Paul Revere, His Sons & Grandsons*. Revised edition, 1976, 32.

One is tempted to wonder if that 14 lb difference was the weight of the bell's clapper. The Stickneys came to believe that our Falmouth bell was the 15<sup>th</sup> church bell created by Revere. In contrast, in 1896 Barton thought it was the 16<sup>th</sup>. In either case, our Falmouth bell was one of Revere's earliest church bells.

5. Jack Allen, *Sketch with Measurements of the Paul Revere Bell, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts*. In the possession of the archives of the First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts, of the UCC. Jack Allen, husband of then Archivist Karen Allen, detected the weathered "Revere, Boston 1796" inscription on the bell, which had long been overlooked.

6. The image of the Paul Revere & Co. Bell advertisement is from the *Boston Directory* in 1823. Paul Revere died in 1818. The image is in the public domain.

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PaulRevere\\_BostonDirectory\\_1823.png](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PaulRevere_BostonDirectory_1823.png)

7. Stickney, 4, 5, 15, 32, plus loose insert pages entitled, "New Discoveries." The Stickneys researched original Revere papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston and numerous ledgers and stock books from the Revere foundry.

At the time their book was published, the Stickneys assumed that our Falmouth bell was created by Paul Revere and not by another member of his family. However, they felt they couldn't confirm that definitely because they were not aware that our bell bore the characteristic Revere

name, albeit now weathered. Also, at the time their book was printed, they apparently were not aware of the receipt received from Paul Revere when our church bell was purchased. However, the Stickneys later visited Falmouth, saw the weathered "Revere, Boston 1796" inscription that Jack Allen had found on the bell, and concluded that our bell was definitely made by Paul Revere. In fact, the Stickneys thought our bell could have been the 15<sup>th</sup> church bell created by Paul Revere. Julia St. George, "Falmouth's Revered Church Bell: The Ring of History," in *The Cape Cod Times*, Sunday, November 3, 1996. B1–B2.

8. Stickney, 13.

9. Stickney, 7.

10. Julia St. George, "Falmouth's Revered Church Bell: The Ring of History."

11. *The Congregationalist*, No. 18, 30, April 1895, 718; *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, April 25, 1896.

12. The image of Katharine Lee Bates is in the public domain.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Katherine\\_Lee\\_Bates.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Katherine_Lee_Bates.jpg)

13. Katharine Lee Bates' poem was read by Miss Edith Holton of the class of '96 in Falmouth's Lawrence High School. "1796–1896, Centennial Paul Revere Bell," *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, April 25, 1896.

*The Falmouth Bell* appeared in Katharine Lee Bates's book, *America the Beautiful and Other Poems* (New York: Thomas Y Crowell Company, 1911), 39–41. The published 1911 version of *The Falmouth Bell* differs in a few places from the version that was published by *The Enterprise* on April 25, 1896, shortly after the Centennial. The original line "Sweet her shy arbutus blows . . ." was replaced with "Sweet her nestled Mayflower blows . . ." in 1911.

14. Rev. William Eleazor Barton (1861–1930) was ordained a Congregational minister in 1885. He was called to serve the prestigious Shawmut Congregational Church in Boston in 1893. In 1902, he went to serve the Congregational church in Oak Park, Illinois, which he retired from in 1924. Barton had many accomplishments during his career. Among them, he became Vice President of the American Peace Society, a published scholar on the life of Abraham Lincoln, and an authority on Congregational church polity. See "William E. Barton Letters and Inventory of His Letters at Syracuse University." [http://library.syr.edu/digital/guides/b/barton\\_we.htm](http://library.syr.edu/digital/guides/b/barton_we.htm)

15. Rev. Wm. E. Barton, "1796–1896, Centennial Paul Revere Bell" *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, MA, Saturday, April 25, 1896.

16. The image to the right is of the cover page of the worship and program bulletin, which was developed for the April 19 and 20, 1896 centennial celebration of our church's Paul Revere Bell. Below are images of the internal pages of that bulletin.

## Sunday Morning Programme.

11 O'Clock.

Strangers Welcome

### HISTORICAL.

1. ORGAN PRELUDE, Triumphal March from Naaman
2. WORSHIP.—RESPONSIVE READING.  
*Minister.*—Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.  
*People.*—Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.  
*Minister.*—O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men.  
*People.*—Lord God of Israel, there is no God like Thee in heaven above or in earth beneath, who keepeth covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before Thee with all their heart.  
*All.*—The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him.
3. SILENT PRAYER—Followed by the chanting of LORD'S PRAYER by Choir.
4. BIBLE INSTRUCTION. "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set."
5. ANTHEM. Choir
6. A CENTENNIAL OFFERTORY For Home Expenses.
7. HYMN 1067.  
 As shadows cast by cloud and sun  
 Ebb o'er the summer grass,  
 So earth's generations pass.
8. THE PASTORAL PRAYER and Organ Worship.
9. HYMN 1060. Sung in memory of our Forefathers
10. THE SERMON. Text, Ex. 29:25. "They made bells." Subject.—BELLS AS INSTRUMENTS OF WORSHIP.
12. HYMN 603 (Gospel Hymn). "Oh, the clanging bells of Time."
13. BENEDICTION.
14. ORGAN POSTLUDE.

"I awakened the Captain of the Minute Men; and after that I alarmed almost every house, till I got to Lexington."—[PAUL REVERE'S account of his ride.



PAUL REVERE, A Son of Liberty.

"REVERE, PAUL, Bell and Cannon Foundry, Lynn, St. House, North Square.—[Boston Directory 1790.

## Sunday Evening Programme.

7.30 O'Clock.

Seats All Free.

### PATRIOTIC.

1. ORGAN VOLUNTARY.
2. INVOCATION.
3. HYMN 1072, "Day is Dying in the West."
4. READING OF SCRIPTURE.
5. HYMN 1049, "Patriots' Day."  
 "Here beneath a virtuous sway  
 May we cheerfully obey;  
 Never feel oppression's rod  
 Ever own and worship God."
6. PAUL REVERE'S ACCOUNT of his Ride to Lexington, April 18, 1775.
7. CHOIR, "To thee O Country," Eichberg
8. EVENING PRAYER.
9. HYMN 502, (Gospel Hymns.)  
 Young men in Christ, arise  
 The world before you lies.
10. THE SERMON. Subject:—THE MINUTE MAN OF '96 OR THE DUTY OF A CHRISTIAN CITIZEN TO-DAY
11. HYMN 738, "America."
12. BENEDICTION and Organ Postlude.

### NOTICES.

1. SUNDAY SCHOOL, Sabbath Day at noon.
2. Y. P. S. C. E. Sunday Evening at 6.30 o'clock in the Vestry, led by Miss Martha Hatch.
3. FRIDAY. Town Conference at North Falmouth.
4. FRIDAY EVENING, 7.45 O'CLOCK. Church Covenant Meeting.
5. SATURDAY. Sunshine Hour at 3.

## Monday Evening Programme.

7.45 O'Clock.

The Public Invited.

### THE JUBILEE.

1. ORGAN PRELUDE.
2. SELECTION BY THE CHOIR and Invocation.
3. READING OF PSALM.
4. WORDS OF WELCOME by the Pastor.
5. HYMN 824, "Blest be the tie that binds."
6. READING. (a) The ORIGINAL RECEIPT of the BELL, Dea. Obed F. Hitch, (b) "PAUL REVERE'S RIDE," Miss Frances G. Swift. (c) ORIGINAL POEM, written expressly for the Centennial of the Bell by Katharine Lee Bates.
7. CHOIR. "The Belfrey Tower."
8. THE CENTENNIAL ADDRESS. REV. WILLIAM E. BARTON, D. D. PASTOR SHAWMUT CHURCH, BOSTON.
9. DUET. "O wert thou in the cauld blast." Mrs. William F. Bourne, Miss Harriet C. Davis,
10. DOXOLOGY L. M.
11. RECEPTION AND SOCIAL in the Vestry, in charge of Reception Committee. It is hoped that all will repair to the Vestry at once.

17. This image of our church is on the cover of the April 3, 1892 worship bulletin of our church, which bears this title: *Congregational Weekly Calendar, Published by the Boys of the Sippewisset Club connected with the First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Mass.* At that time, some sections of our church's exterior were painted brown.

18. "Massachusetts Sunday School Association: Barnstable West District with the Congregational Church in Falmouth, November 15, 1920," *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, November 19, 1910, Vol. XVI, No. 33.

19. Margaret G. Long, *The Treasured Heritage of The First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts, 1708–1958*, 15.

20. Karen Allen, "Ring Out in Honor of Brave Paul Revere.,"; Ruth Washburn Sterling, *Memories of Old Falmouth . . . The Parsonage Children*, originally published in the *Falmouth Enterprise*, Friday, August 19, 1955, 7.

21. *The Enterprise*, Vol., VI, No. 8, Falmouth, MA, Saturday, May 26, 1900.

22. Theodate Geoffrey, *Suckanesset: Wherein May Be Read a History of Falmouth, Massachusetts* (Falmouth: The Falmouth Publishing Company, 1930), 67.

23. This image is of the picture "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere," created in 1942–1945 by the Office for Emergency Management, Office of War Information, Overseas Operations Branch, New York Office, News and Features Bureau, Picture Division. It is in the collection of the National Archives, "Pictures of the Revolutionary War," "Beginnings in New England, 1775–76." Paul Revere's ride, illustration, ARC 535721, 208-FS-3200-5.

<http://www.archives.gov/research/american-revolution/pictures/images/revolutionary-war-007.jpg>  
The image is in the public domain.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Paul\\_Revere%27s\\_ride.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Paul_Revere%27s_ride.jpg)

## Chapter 21 – Antoinette Palmer Jones: The Goodness and Power of One Christian

An Expanded Sermon

*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval . . . By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going . . . By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. By faith the wall of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days.*

[Hebrews 11:1–2, 8, 29–30 NRSV]

Years ago, I overheard a young man and an older man talking.<sup>(1)</sup> At one point in the conversation, the older man said to the younger:

*So, you want to make a real difference in the world? Let me tell you something. You're just one person. What can you do? I tell you what. If you think you can make a difference, try this experiment. Put your finger in a bucket of water. Then pull your finger out and see how much of an impression you've left.*

*I don't want to discourage you. But that's the way life is. As individuals, none of us has much power. We're all just small drops of water in that great sea called humanity. Human life is so vast and complex that the best any of us can hope for is a bit of good fortune and the ability to flow along with that sea, day after day.*



Antoinette Palmer Jones

The young man started out with an expression of bright-eyed eagerness on his face. But, as the older man spoke, I could see the young man's enthusiasm fade.

The word "cynic" comes from a school of ancient Greek philosophers who took a negative view of much of the world around them. It seems that our world has always had its cynics. Even our Holy Bible has its share of cynics who seem to have reveled in pessimistic views of the human condition. Consider, for example, Ecclesiastes the Preacher who declared:

*All is vanity. What do people gain from all the toil at which they toil under the sun? . . . All things are wearisome . . . What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun. I saw all the deeds that are done*

*under the sun; and see, all is vanity and a chasing after wind.*

[Ecclesiastes 1:2c,2,8a,9,14]

What do you think? Was Ecclesiastes right? Is this life we humans live just vanity and a chasing after wind? Is there nothing to be gained from all our human efforts and nothing new under the sun? Was the older man right in telling the younger one that he, as an individual, was powerless to make any real difference in our world?

The fact is that I strongly disagree with such cynics. And I believe Jesus would have disagreed with them too. After all, Jesus counseled his followers, saying,

*You are the light of the world . . . let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works . . .*

In God's world, individual people really do matter. For God calls us as individuals, not just as groups. God calls us as individuals to catch the vision and step out from the crowd, so we can accomplish great things and even blaze new trails others can follow for the improvement of our world. In God's world, individual people really can make a difference. And they make that difference when they respond in faith to God's calling with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength.

As our scripture reading today from the book of Hebrews has reminded us, our Bible is full of individual people—for example, Abraham, Moses, Gideon, David, Samuel, and the prophets—who have done great things through their faith. I will tell you now about a Falmouth woman—a woman in our own Falmouth church years ago who made a great deal of difference in our world. She made a great difference when she responded in faith to her own sense of God's calling in her life.

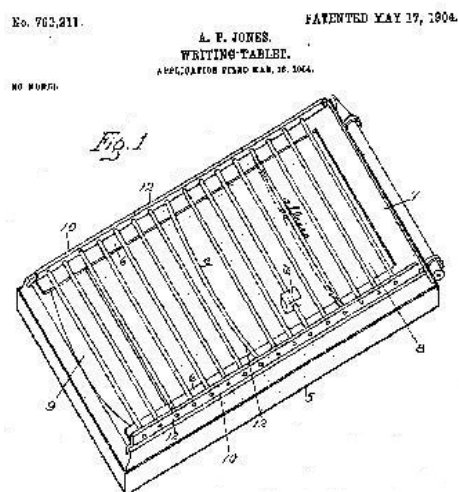
Given all the transitions our church and Cape Cod have been through over the last century, this woman has almost been completely forgotten. Yet, even if most of us forgot her, we can be assured that God has remembered her. And God has remembered her good deeds, which even now continue to bear fruit in our world.

Today I will tell you about Antoinette Palmer Jones, a layperson in our church. In some ways, Antoinette was a remarkable person. In other ways, she seems to have been very ordinary, like most of us. Antoinette doesn't appear to have been a woman of wealth or high social standing. In her adult years, Antoinette was a seamstress who worked out of her home on Falmouth's Palmer Avenue. But Antoinette was a woman of strong faith, intelligence, and energy. And those personal qualities counted for a lot, as they often do in our world.

Antoinette was born on November 20, 1856, in Falmouth.<sup>2</sup> She was the youngest daughter of John Gilmore Jones and Harriet Pettee Jones. The Jones family lived on the so-called Fay Farm in Falmouth. I'm told that likely was the area now known as the Moors, down towards Woods



Hole, off Elm Road.



Antoinette's writing tablet  
U. S. Patent 760, 211

You might be interested to know that Antoinette and Katharine Lee Bates were contemporaries. They may have attended school together, though Antoinette was almost three years older than Katharine. Antoinette's father was a professor of chemistry. His eyes were severely damaged due to a lab explosion. Antoinette grew up being the "eyes" for her father. She read him his mail, newspapers, and books that interested him. And she brought word to him of some spring bird, flower, or anything else that was of interest, so they could talk about it. Antoinette and her father had many discussions. She later said that those talks molded her young mind, giving her a broader perspective on life. Given Antoinette's experience with her father, it is interesting to note that years later, in 1904, she patented the design for a special writing tablet, which she had designed for people with limited or no vision.<sup>(3)</sup>

Antoinette's mother was a "quiet, refined, intelligent woman" who had been "a pupil of Mary Lyons in the early days of Mt. Holyoke Seminary." Antoinette had three older sisters and two older brothers. One of her older sisters came up with the idea of having a reading circle for young women. That circle was said by some to have been the beginning of Falmouth's public library.

Antoinette was an unusual child. She was intense and alert, with a strong will. She also seemed to have a special need to be liked by her peers. Falmouth birth records suggest that Antoinette may have been much younger than her siblings. It wouldn't be uncommon in a situation like that for a child to grow into adulthood feeling rather lonely.

One day, Antoinette was walking with schoolmates down Locust Street over to Palmer Avenue to go downtown. As Antoinette said to her companions, "If I do decide to be a Christian, I'll be one!" According to our church records, Antoinette joined our church on March 10, 1878.<sup>4</sup> She was 21 years old then.

At the death of her father a year later, in 1879, Antoinette and her mother were forced to live in the homes of Antoinette's married siblings. It seems that over time, Antoinette and her mother were passed from home to home. That was very difficult for Antoinette, for it made her feel as though she had been forced to give up her own life and plans.

One day, in a heart-to-heart family discussion, Antoinette made an announcement. She said, "I want to find out how to win the love of people; how to have real friends." With her strong

will and some help from family members, Antoinette took up the dressmaking business. She struggled to provide an income and a home for herself and her mother in Falmouth. It was a hard life. Antoinette didn't love sewing, but it helped her to pay her bills and brought her in touch with other people, which she very much wanted.<sup>5</sup> A friend described Antoinette this way:

*Ever ready to do a kindness, faithful to her church as best she knew how to be, her word was ever "forward."*

As time passed, a great longing began to grow in Antoinette. She wanted to find a special work she could do in the world to be of help to others. That sense of "calling," as I would describe it, was compelling, but it did not yet give Antoinette a clear sense of exactly what she could do.

Antoinette tried different things, such as giving chalk talks at meetings of the local Woman's Christian Temperance Union. But that was not successful. It soon became evident that Antoinette had a gift for writing, but her skill at public speaking was lacking. During that time, Antoinette was a member of the Christian Endeavor Society of our church. In case you don't know it, that was a Christian fellowship organization for young adults.

Christian Endeavor was started in 1881 by Dr. Francis Clark, a Congregational minister in Portland, Maine.<sup>(6)</sup> Apparently that was an idea whose time had come, for under Clark's leadership, that fellowship organization soon sprung up in churches of numerous denominations all around the world. For example, when Christian Endeavor held its 14th Annual Meeting in Boston in 1895, more than 56,000 young adults showed up. And by that year, there were already Christian Endeavor societies in such faraway places as Hawaii, Africa, and Australia, to mention just a few.<sup>7</sup>



A Christian Endeavor symbol

Sometime between 1881 and 1887, our church had the first Christian Endeavor society in Falmouth. Then on August 17, 1887, a second Endeavor society was formed in our church.<sup>8</sup> The original record book of that second Endeavor society is in our church's archives. And wouldn't you know it? Antoinette Palmer Jones was one of the secretaries of that Endeavor society. In that tattered ledger, one can still see Antoinette's flowing, easy-to-read handwriting.

Christian Endeavor societies of that time adopted a pledge that every member of their society was expected to embrace and live up to. A framed copy of Antoinette's society pledge is in our church's archives. As important as that pledge apparently was to their society, I wouldn't be surprised if they kept it hung up on a wall for years in the room directly below our church sanctuary.

Imagine the year 1887. Imagine young adults from our church gathering downstairs at night and reciting their society's pledge together in the soft glow of oil lamps. There was no

electricity in town then. Here's what they all promised in their pledge:

*Trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for strength, I promise Him that I will strive to do whatever He would like to have me do: I will make it the rule of my life to pray and read the Bible, to support the work and worship of my church, and to take my part in the meetings and other activities of this Society.*

*I will seek to bring others to Christ, to give as I can for the spread of the Kingdom, to advance my country's welfare and promote the Christian Brotherhood of man. These things I will do unless hindered by conscientious reasons; and in them all I will seek the Saviour's guidance.*

Antoinette always tried to live up to that Endeavor pledge. The part that gave her the most trouble was standing up and speaking at Endeavor meetings. But she felt she needed to do that in order to be a full participant in that group. Tearful emotions sometimes came into Antoinette's voice as she spoke. Then she would drop back into her seat, feeling like a complete failure.

One day, Antoinette came rushing down a Falmouth street and thrust a card into the hand of a friend, which she asked her friend to keep. Signed by Antoinette, that card contained this pledge: "I hereby solemnly promise I will abstain from weeping." Antoinette was a person of her word. When she made a pledge, she strove to fulfill it.

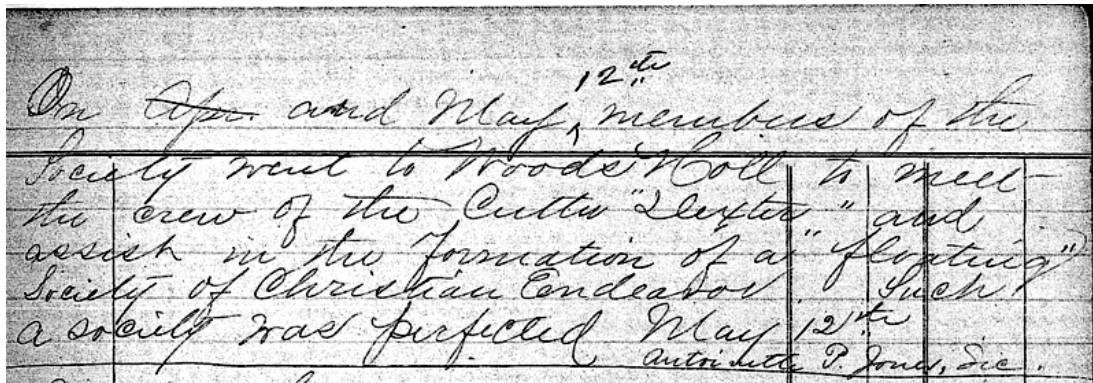
In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Falmouth was quite a nautical center. At that time, a man named Madison Edwards, who was four years older than Antoinette, was conducting a ministry to sailors whose ships were docked at Woods Hole.<sup>9</sup> There was a reading room on shore for those sailors, and Edwards was sometimes invited on board their ships to conduct worship services. One day Edwards asked the Christian Endeavor Society in our First Congregational Church to help him in his work. Antoinette lived closest to our town's telegraph station, so she became the contact person who transmitted Edwards' telegraphed calls for assistance to the other members of her society.

One night, a ship came in. Edwards called for help, and Antoinette was the only Christian Endeavor member able to go. So Antoinette bravely went all by herself. It was so dark that night that she had to trust her horse to find its own way to Woods Hole. Antoinette was very willing to give of herself to help others. At this time, she was beginning to realize how much she really loved this special ministry to sailors.

Another night, after services in Woods Hole, Madison Edwards told Antoinette and others about his interest in having the Christian Endeavor pledge adapted to the men on board ships. That idea captured Antoinette's imagination. The very next morning, she had a letter in the mail to the headquarters of Christian Endeavor, which was located in Boston. Antoinette's letter carried both the plan for a new type of Christian Endeavor Society specifically tailored for men on

ships and a revised Christian Endeavor pledge for it. The headquarters in Boston gave Antoinette the go-ahead. Thus it was that she and other members of our church's Endeavor Society went down to Woods Hole on May 12, 1890.

There on the United States Revenue Cutter Dexter, Antoinette, and others organized the very first shipboard Endeavor Society.<sup>(10)</sup> As noted, "twelve of the [Dexter's] sailors signed the pledge, organized a society, and held their first consecration meeting."<sup>11</sup> That was the beginning of an entirely new branch of Christian Endeavor.



On Apr. and May, 12<sup>th</sup>, members of the Society went to Woods Hole to meet the crew of the Cutter "Dexter" and assist in the formation of a "floating" Society of Christian Endeavor. Such a society was perfected May 12<sup>th</sup>. Antoinette P. Jones, Sec.

Record of the May 12, 1890 founding of Floating Christian Endeavor in Antoinette Palmer Jones' handwriting



United States Revenue Cutter Dexter

Within a month of the first Floating Christian Endeavor Society being formed on the Revenue Cutter Dexter, the Boston headquarters of Christian Endeavor named Antoinette the Superintendent of all such "floating" societies that could be developed. Antoinette was 33 years old at the time.<sup>(12)</sup>

As it happened, Antoinette's "Floating Christian Endeavor" movement grew quickly. By 1895, just five years after the Dexter event, there were already sixty Floating Societies with a total of two to

three thousand members. Those societies were on both ships at sea and in ports. Within that five year period, there were already societies in New York City; Cleveland, Ohio; Boston; Galveston, Texas; San Francisco; New Zealand; Australia; and England.<sup>13</sup> As Antoinette wrote:

*The Floating Society of Christian Endeavor is . . . not limited to one ocean, or one class of men of the sea, it offers equal inspiration to its members in consecration to Christ, training for His service, fellowship with His disciples, and personal endeavor 'afloat' and ashore; whether they are on man-of-war, ocean steamship, merchantman, coaster, or*

*fisherman.*<sup>14</sup>

By 1906, there were more than two hundred of those “floating” societies around the world. The crew members in those societies held worship services on board their ships. They also joined together in saying the version of the Christian Endeavor pledge that was specifically for sailors. In that version, individuals promised to abstain from all alcohol.<sup>(15)</sup>

Floating Christian Endeavor groups, which were based on shore, made visits to ships. They held worship services for sailors. They helped provide maritime personnel with medical services, reading rooms, boarding houses, and comfort items such as hand-knit sleeveless sweaters. However, as Antoinette said, the highest aim of Floating Christian Endeavor was “soul winning” for Christ.<sup>(16)</sup>



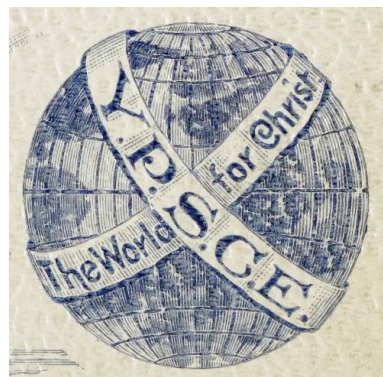
Some New York Port Floating Society members



Floating Christian Endeavor anchor cross

In the United States Navy, members of Floating Christian Endeavor were allowed to wear their Endeavor badges on their uniforms. There was a Floating Christian Endeavor Society on the famous American battleship U.S.S. Maine, which was blown up in Havana harbor in 1898: “Remember the Maine!”

There was a Floating society on Admiral Dewey’s flagship, the U.S.S. Olympia, when it entered Manila Bay in that same year. There were even Floating Endeavor folks in the Japanese navy when it was at war with Russia in the early 1900s.<sup>17</sup> A Floating Christian Endeavor home for sailors was founded in Nagasaki, Japan, by a Christian Endeavor sailor who later died in the sinking of the U.S.S. Maine.<sup>18</sup>



Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor

In 1921, a Floating Christian Endeavor reading room in San Diego hosted more than seventy-two thousand maritime personnel. They used that facility to write more than thirty-nine thousand letters to loved ones and friends.<sup>19</sup>

Our local branch of Floating Christian Endeavor was



Christian Endeavor mission launch vessel  
Vineyard Sound, Massachusetts

active in Vineyard Sound. Its mission launch vessel flew the Christian Endeavor flag and sailed around the Sound, throwing reading materials onboard passing ships. It also transported sailors to shore for worship services.<sup>(20)</sup>

Antoinette Palmer Jones, the young woman who had been so anxious about public speaking in the downstairs vestry of our church, suddenly found herself traveling all over to tell people about Floating Christian Endeavor and its ministry with sailors for Jesus Christ. She was often a guest

speaker at Christian Endeavor gatherings and events with nautical personnel.<sup>21</sup> She was once described as speaking on her favorite subject, Floating Christian Endeavor, in “her usual happy and energetic manner.”<sup>22</sup> As Antoinette used to say, “My work is like Ivory Soap. It floats and it is 99.99 percent pure.”<sup>23</sup>

In 1911, our church asked our Barnstable Association of Churches to license Antoinette as a Congregational lay preacher. She served as a supply preacher in Congregational churches and seamen’s chapels from time to time and felt that affirmation by our denomination would be helpful.<sup>24</sup> The Association licensed her as a lay preacher for four successive years. Antoinette was likely the first woman ever to be granted that authorization from our Barnstable Association.

As a delegate from our Barnstable Association, Antoinette attended the 1913 meeting of the National Council of Congregationalists which met in Kansas City, Missouri. That meeting adopted Congregationalism’s famous “Kansas City Statement of Faith,” which, in a slightly altered form, is the Statement of Faith that appears in our Falmouth church’s bylaws today.<sup>25</sup>

Antoinette was a voluminous letter writer. The young woman, who was so eager to have friends, eventually found that she was corresponding with people all over the world. As Falmouth’s “The Enterprise” newspaper once said of Antoinette:

*In close touch with sailors from all parts of the globe, she had a knowledge of the life and surroundings of the sailor in port and at sea. She was a friend to the sailor lad and many a young man in the uniform was brought to Christ because of the helping hand she held out to him.*<sup>26</sup>



In Antoinette's correspondence, she often received interesting items from around the world, which she then shared with our community. For example, as our local newspaper reported in 1898, she received an account of the battle of Manila Bay<sup>(27)</sup> in the Philippines from men on Commodore Dewey's flagship, the U.S.S. Olympia, which led the U.S. fleet to victory over the Spanish fleet there.<sup>28</sup> In 1909, she received "a fancy box holding a packet of the famous Lipton tea from Colombo, Ceylon," sent to her by the battleship Fortress Monroe.<sup>29</sup> As noted, those items were placed on display at the Falmouth Jewelry store for anyone to see. Antoinette served the cause of "Floating Christian Endeavor" for almost 30 years.



"Battle of Manila Bay"  
U.S.S. Olympia on left

SATURDAY, DEC. 21, 1918.



"Long May It Wave."

ANTOINETTE PALMER JONES.

It is with a feeling of profound sadness that we record the home-going of Miss Jones. Born in Falmouth, she has grown up from a child to be a part of the life of our village. For many years she was very active in Christian Endeavor work and later became the founder of Floating Christian Endeavor, and finally was elected president of the World's Floating Endeavor societies. In close touch with sailors from all parts of the globe, she had a knowledge accorded to a very few people, of the life and surroundings of the sailor, in port and at sea. She was a friend to the sailor lad and many a young man in the uniform has brought to Christ because of the helping hand she held out to him.

*The Enterprise*  
Falmouth, Massachusetts

During World War I, Antoinette was there to be sure that all of Falmouth's young men heading off to war had New Testaments, calendars, and sleeveless sweaters to keep them warm.<sup>30</sup> During that war, Antoinette served as a liaison between Massachusetts officials and the families of those Falmouth men who were fighting overseas.<sup>31</sup> Antoinette also served in the Red Cross effort to provide for the war-time needs of those same Falmouth families.<sup>32</sup>

As it happened, a great influenza epidemic swept across our country in 1918. Antoinette was one of the many people who died during that epidemic. She died on December 15, 1918, at the age of 62.<sup>33</sup> It was just about a month after the end of World War I. Her funeral was held in a local home, not in our church as planned, because there was then a ban on public gatherings due to the influenza. At the time of Antoinette's death, several tributes to her were published in our local newspaper, including the article on the left<sup>(34)</sup> and also the following statement<sup>35</sup>:

#### *A NOBLE WOMAN PASSES TO HER REWARD*

*In the death . . . of Miss Antoinette Palmer Jones there passed from our community a sincere Christian woman—one of whom it may truly be said, "She was full of good works." Her sudden passing away has thrown over the entire community a cloud of gloom . . .*



In the year 1942, during World War II, our local newspaper again celebrated Antoinette's life, in part because of the example of her good works during World War I, which she set for others.<sup>36</sup> (<sup>37</sup>)

You might be interested to know that Christian Endeavor still exists in America today. That society seems particularly active on our west coast. And even today, in Southern California, there is a Harbor Mission for sailors, which owes its origin to one of those societies in Antoinette's "Floating Christian Endeavor."<sup>38</sup>

Here's the question: Is it possible for just one person, to make a real difference in our world?

My answer to that question is yes; it is entirely possible! It is possible, particularly if you are a person like Antoinette Palmer Jones, who responded to God's calling with all her heart, mind, soul, and strength!



Antoinette P. Jones

## ENDNOTES

1. The picture of Antoinette Palmer Jones is from Rev. Francis Clark, *World Wide Endeavor: The Story of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor* (Gillespie, Metzger, and Kelley, 1895), 385.

2. A considerable amount of information on Antoinette Palmer Jones is in the following newspaper article, published shortly after her death. Celia L. Rogers, "A PEN PICTURE OF AND A TRIBUTE TO MISS A. P. JONES, Written Especially for 'the Boys Who Are Coming Back' and Who Will Miss Her Smile and Welcome; for Those of the Sea and Everywhere for Whom She Gave Her Best; for Her Home Church, and All Who Were Workers With Her," *The Enterprise*, Saturday, December 21, 1918, Vol. XXIV, No. 38.

3. Antoinette's writing tablet was said to provide a series of yielding guides that could be followed by the finger or writing implement of a blind or partially blind person. This image is in the public domain. It was originally from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.  
<http://news.google.com/patents/about?id=5pxnAAAAEBAJ>  
 [760211\_WRITING\_TABLET[1].pdf]

4. FCC3, 29. As our local newspaper said of Antoinette shortly after her death,  
*A faithful attendant at all the church services and Sunday school of the First Congregational church, where for many years she was an active member, she will be greatly missed in the church life into which she entered heartily, and played her part with earnestness and zeal, conscientiously.*  
 E. H. K., "Antoinette Palmer Jones," *The Enterprise*, Saturday, December 21, 1918, Vol. XXIV,

No. 38.

5. Ruth Washburn Sterling was the daughter of Rev. Charles Washburn, our church's minister from 1890–1898. Ruth wrote of childhood memories she had of visiting Miss Antoinette P. Jones, the village dressmaker. As Ruth said,

*[Miss Jones] was an extremely zealous woman where good works were concerned . . . She will be remembered more for her charitable project of caring for the sailor on land than for anything else I believe. Up until her death I'm told, she devoted all her time and energy to efforts on their behalf. I can remember the ditty bags she made and solicited from others for the sailor lads to carry, with them at sea.*

Ruth Washburn Sterling, *Memories of Old Falmouth . . . The Parsonage Children*, originally published in the *Falmouth Enterprise*, Friday August 19, 1955, 5.

6. This image is from a pamphlet of a Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor at the Whangarei Central Baptist Church in New Zealand: *Baptist Church, Whangarei, Y.P.S.C.E. Syllabus—July to December, 1915*, Whangarei, New Zealand.  
<https://www.whangareicbc.org/wcbc-history/>

7. Rev. Francis E. Clark, Amos R. Wells, John Willis Baer, "The Christian Endeavor Movement," *The New England Magazine*, June 1892, New Series, Vol. VI., March–August 1892, 513–528.

8. *Yarmouth Register*, Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts, Saturday, February 14, 1891, Vol. 55, No. 7.

9. Madison Edwards was born in Woods Hole in 1852. At age 16, he apparently attended a service in our church and came to feel that he had a calling to minister to sailors. Steven H. Park, "Tending the Vineyard: Maritime Religion on Martha's Vineyard from 1824–1978" (1999). *Conference Papers*, Paper 2, University of Connecticut, 15–16.  
[http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/hist\\_papers/2/](http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/hist_papers/2/)

For information on Edwards, Parks noted his indebtedness to George W. Wiseman, *They Kept the Lower Lights Burning: The Story of the Seaman's Bethel and Its Church* (Orlando, Florida: Printed by Daniels Publishers, some time after 1978), 22.

FCC3, 27, 197, 202, 210. Edwards joined our First Congregational Church on March 7, 1869. On March 1, 1879, he was given a letter of dismissal from our church to join the People's Church of Woods Hole. But on December 3, 1880, he was subsequently received back into our church at his request and after saying that he never gave that letter of dismissal to any other church. On July 1, 1884, he received a letter of dismissal and recommendation from our church to the Methodist Episcopal church in Woods Hole.

In 1888, Edwards was hired by The Boston Seaman's Friend Society to conduct mission work in Woods Hole. In 1893, the society and Edwards developed a reading room for seafarers in Vineyard Haven on Martha's Vineyard. It came to be known as the Seaman's Bethel. It offered religious services, a library, and a game room and continued in operation until the late 1950s. Karin Stanley, *Finding Aid to the Martha's Vineyard Museum, Record Unit 246, Vineyard Haven Seaman's Bethel Collection, 1860–1993*, 2.

<http://www.marthasvineyardhistory.org/documents/MarthasVineyardRailroad--RU117.pdf>

10. *Constitution and Bylaws* [Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor of the First Congregational Church of Falmouth] *Secretary's Records*. August 17, 1887–Jan. 11, 1892. This is a school writing book in the archives of our church.

11. John McClintock, James Strong, "Endeavor," *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Volume III, E, F, G, 1045.

12. The photo of the United States Revenue Cutter Dexter is an official U.S. Coast Guard photograph. It is in the public domain. The Dexter was commissioned in 1874 and decommissioned in 1908. It was 143 feet and 6 inches in length, with a displacement of 188 tons. The Revenue Marine Steamer Dexter was stationed in Newport, Rhode Island, and patrolled Long Island Sound and as far east as Nantucket.

<http://www.uscg.mil/history/webcutters/Dexter1874.asp>

13. Clark, *World Wide Endeavor*, 388–391.

14. Clark, *World Wide Endeavor*, 385.

15. The image of members of the New York Port Floating Society is from a photograph in Clark, *World Wide Endeavor*, 387. It is in the public domain.

16. The Christian Endeavor image of the anchor cross is from Clark, *World Wide Endeavor*, 384.

17. Rev. Francis E. Clark, *Christian Endeavor In All Lands, A Record of Twenty-five Years of Progress: The Story of a Great Religious Movement which has Spread Over all the Earth from a Small Beginning in America* (W. E. Scull, 1906), 463–464.

18. A. J. Fegert, "Christian Endeavor On Battleships," *The Sabbath Recorder*, A Seventh Day Baptist Weekly Published By the American Sabbath Tract Society, Plainfield, New Jersey, December 7, 1914, Vol. 77, No. 23, Whole Number 3640, 726. Known as The Christian Endeavor Home for Seamen, that non-alcoholic refuge for seamen was opened on February 3, 1896. It operated until the outbreak of war between Japan and the United States in 1941. A history of that home is at "Nagasaki: People, Places and Scenes of the Foreign Settlement of Nagasaki, 1859–1941.

<http://www.nfs.nias.ac.jp/page020.html>

As noted there,

*In summary, the [Seamen's] Home operated on a continual basis in Nagasaki for more than forty years, providing American and European sailors an alternative to the "grog shops" and "tea houses" of the city. It offered aid and comfort when needed, and a place to relax and socialize without having to consume alcoholic beverages. By providing such facilities, the Home made a positive contribution to Nagasaki that could be appreciated by foreigners and Japanese alike.*

See also: Lane R. Earns, "Like A Lighthouse on a Stormy Night: The Seamen's Home of

Nagasaki.”

[https://www.uwosh.edu/faculty\\_staff/earns/seaman.html](https://www.uwosh.edu/faculty_staff/earns/seaman.html).

19. “Falmouth Woman Founder of Worldwide Society: Cape Cod Dressmaker Started Work, ‘Pure and Floating’ Like Ivory Soap,” *Falmouth Enterprise*, May 14, 1943.

20. The photograph of the Christian Endeavor Mission Launch is from Clark, *World Wide Endeavor*, 387.

21. One example is that she was the first speaker at a British and American sailors’ gathering held in the Faith Presbyterian Church in New York City. “SAILORS IN THE PULPIT: Men from the British and American Fleets Speak to Faith Church,” *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, October 23, 1909, Vol., XV, No. 29.

22. “Y. P. S. C. E. Convention,” *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, December 10, 1898, Vol. IV, No. 36.

23. “Falmouth Woman Founder of Worldwide Society,” 1943.

24. *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, November 25, 1911, Vol. XVII, No. 33.

25. *The National Council of Congregational Churches of the United States, Addresses, Reports, Statements of Benevolent Societies, Constitution, Minutes, Roll of Delegates, Etc., of the Fifteenth Triennial Session, Kansas City, Mo., October 22–30, 1913* (Boston: Office of Secretary of the National Council, 1913), 414.

26. E. H. K., “Antoinette Palmer Jones,” *The Enterprise*, Saturday, December 21, 1918.

27. The image of the “Battle of Manila Bay” on May 1, 1898, is from a contemporary color print of that event. The image is now in the public domain. It shows the USS Olympia in the left foreground, leading U.S. forces to destroy the Spanish fleet.

U.S. Naval Historical Center Photograph. Photo #: NH 91881-KN

([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:USS\\_Olympia\\_art\\_NH\\_91881-KN.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:USS_Olympia_art_NH_91881-KN.jpg)), USS Olympia art NH 91881-KN,” Cropped non-image portion from file by DS,

<https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/legalcode>

28. That battleship published an account of its famous battle of the previous May, which was sent to Antoinette and then described in our local newspaper for public interest. *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, August 20, 1898.

29. *The Enterprise*, Saturday, March 6, 1909, Vol. XIV, No. 50.

30. “Sweaters Furnished Falmouth Boys by Woman’s Christian Temperance Union” and “Falmouth Locals,” *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, September 29, 1917, Vol. XXIII, No. 26.

31. "Miss A. P. Jones Appointed Local Chairman by the Massachusetts Soldiers' Information Bureau," *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, September 15, 1917, Vol. XXIII, No. 24.

32. *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, November 24, 1917, Vol. XXIII, No. 34; "Falmouth Woman Founder of Worldwide Society," 1943.

33. Antoinette is buried with her father, John Gilmore Jones [died Falmouth, 10/12/1879 at age 68], and her mother, Harriet Pettee Jones [died Falmouth, 10/31/1895 at age 77], in Lot No. 39 of Rock Hill Cemetery in Foxboro, Massachusetts. Her cause of death was listed as myocarditis. September 10, 2001, and October 9, 2001, emails from Alan Hanna, President, Foxboro Cemetery Corporation.

34. The newspaper article is from *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, December 21, 1918, Vol. XXIV, No. 38.

35. "A NOBLE WOMAN PASSES TO HER REWARD: Sudden death of Miss Antoinette P. Jones Brings Sorrow To Many," *Falmouth Enterprise*, Saturday, December 21, 1918, Vol. XXIV, No. 38.

36. "Falmouth Woman Founder of Worldwide Society," 1943.

37. This image of Antoinette P. Jones appeared in Rev. Francis E. Clark's book *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, 1906, 467.

38. In 1905, a corporation was formed under the name of Southern California Floating Christian Endeavor Association and its mission was named The Sailor's Rest Mission. Today, that organization is known as the Beacon Light Mission, 525 Broad Ave., Wilmington, CA 90744. Its web site is named "Beacon Light Mission Men's Shelter, "Soap, Soup, and Salvation." [http://www.beaconlightmission.org/blm\\_history.php5](http://www.beaconlightmission.org/blm_history.php5)

## Chapter 22 – Our Heritage of Hymns Over 300 Years

### A Service of Worship

This morning's worship service follows the procession of hymnals and hymns that have served our church through its 300 year history. In the early years of our church, there was no organ and no choir. And the psalms of David translated into English from the original Hebrew were "tuned" or "lined out" by a precentor chosen by our church's members. The text boxes that follow indicate the hymnals used by our congregation and the years in which they were used. It appears that our congregation used ten different hymnals over three hundred years.

### MOMENT OF GREETINGS AND CONCERNS

#### 1. [1708–1772]

**THE BAY PSALM BOOK** [published 1640, revised 1651]  
 "The First Book Printed in English in America"

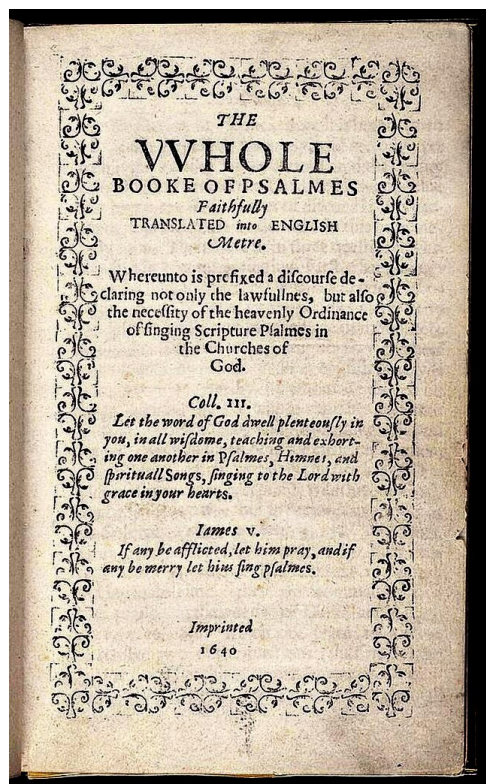
Title page: *"Let the word of God dwell plenteously in you, in all wisdom, teaching and exhortating one another in Psalmes, Himnes, and spirituall Songs, singing to the Lord with grace in your hearts."* Coll. III

It's been said that New England Puritans hated music. One might think that because they rejected many musical forms in their services of worship. For example, they did not allow choirs, anthems, chants, or any musical instruments, including organs, in their services. In fact, a number of New England Puritans loved music and enjoyed the use of musical instruments in their homes. However, when it came to their worship, they had the following concerns:<sup>1</sup>

First, in the New Testament, they could find no use of musical instruments in early Christian worship. Thus, they assumed God did not intend for such instruments to be used in services. The model for Christian worship in the New Testament mattered a great deal to them. Cotton Mather, a famous New England Puritan minister, argued that if instrumental music was allowed in the worship of their meeting houses, the next thing allowed would be dancing, and then a "whole rabble of church-officers" would be needed too. Mather likely was referring to organists and choir directors when he used that word "rabble."<sup>2</sup>

The second concern of the Puritans was that if music in worship was too elegant, it would distract worshipers and hinder their spiritual communing with God. Thus, to keep the music in their services simple, they restricted it to their congregations singing biblical psalms in unison. Once again, because they found no warrant for it in the New Testament, they would not sing hymns not found in the Bible. As they said, such non-biblical hymns were merely "of human composure."

In fact, New England Puritan congregations did enjoy signing the psalms in their worship services. It was a practice that had been passed down to them from 16<sup>th</sup>-century Geneva Reformer John Calvin in their Reformed Protestant tradition.



The Bay Psalm Book

It is significant that the first book printed in New England was the “Bay Psalm Book,” published in 1640 in Cambridge.<sup>(3)</sup> The Puritans of Plymouth Colony and those of the Bay Colony had both brought psalm books for worship singing with them to this New World.<sup>4</sup> However, a need was soon felt for a new psalm book, which would be a more literal translation of the original Hebrew in which the psalms were written.

The hope was that a more literal translation would be more pleasing to God. Thus, a group of Puritan ministers created the Bay Psalm Book. Its actual title began with these words: “The Whole Booke of Psalmes Translated into English Metre . . .” The original Bay Psalm Book contained no tunes.<sup>5</sup> However, in 1698, a version of it was published with some English psalm tunes.<sup>6</sup> As it turned out, the Bay Psalm Book was a great success. It became “the” psalm book used by virtually all of New England’s Puritan churches for a century or more.<sup>7</sup> Its popularity caused it to go through about fifty-seven editions. Without a doubt, it is also the book that our Falmouth church used in worship when our church was first gathered in the year 1708.

In 1681, the “lining out” of psalms was begun in Plymouth. By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, that way of singing the psalms became the common practice in New England’s Puritan churches—including in our own Falmouth church. Without musical accompaniment, a precentor or clerk would “line out” a psalm by reading each of its lines outloud before the congregation sang it. That was done to help any parishioners who were illiterate. It also helped make up for any shortage in Bay Psalm books. But that method also produced some terrible singing. One problem was that precentors could not always be depended upon to carry a tune or stick to the same tune they had started.

If you will, let’s imagine that we are all back in the year 1708, when our church was gathered. Imagine that we are worshiping in a simple wooden meeting house down by the Old Burying Ground in Falmouth, off today’s Mill Road. We are sitting on simple wooden benches, with men on one side of the meeting house and women on the other side. Some of us have Bay Psalm Books in hand. Our worship has begun. At this point in the service, our precentor steps forward and lines out the first hymn in our worship. It is Psalme 100, A Psalme of Prayse.



**\*PSALME 100, a Psalme of Prayse**

Precentor

*Make yee a joyfull founding noyse/ unto Iehovah, all the earth;  
 Serve yee Iehovah with gladness: before his presence come with mirth.  
 Know, that Iehovah he is God,/ who hath us formed it is hee,  
 & not our selves: his owne people/& sheepe of his pasture are wee.  
 Enter into his gates with prayse,/into his Courts with thanksfullness:  
 Make yee confession unto him,/ & his name reverently blesse,  
 Because Iehovah he is good,/for evermore is his mercy;  
 & unto generations all/ continue doth his verity.*

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP [from Psalme 150, Bay Psalm Book]**

Lay Reader

Leader: Praise yee the Lord, praise God in's place of holines:  
 People: O praise him in the firmament of his great mightines.  
 Leader: O praise him for his acts that be magnificent; & praise yee him according to  
 his greatnes excellent.  
 People: Let every thing to which the Lord doth breath afford the praises of the  
 Lord set forth.  
 Unison: O doe yee praise the Lord.

**INVOCATION (in unison)**

Almighty and eternal God, most blessed and most holy, we worship and adore you. We acknowledge your infinite glory. We celebrate your divine majesty. We praise you for the wonder of your love in Jesus Christ, our Lord. O God, you have given us minds to know you, hearts to love you, and voices to sing forth your praise. Help us in this 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of our church to deepen our discipleship in Christ's name. Guide each and every one of us so we may understand you more clearly, love you more deeply, and walk in your holy ways more intentionally. This morning, we praise you with hymns our church has lifted up to you through the centuries. Praying as Jesus taught us, we say, "Our Father. . ."

**THE LORD'S PRAYER (using "debts")**

Prior to the gathering of our church in 1708, the congregation worshipping in Falmouth was a branch church of the Puritan church in Barnstable. Some years after our gathering, that Barnstable church split into West and East churches. It is worth noting that in 1726 there was quite a furor in the Barnstable church in the West. It seems that while the precentor was lining out a psalm one Sunday, some members of that congregation began to defy him. Instead of following the precentor's lead, those church members sang that psalm very loudly in a continuous way, word after word and verse after verse. Confusion soon reigned in that service, and likely the precentor was quite annoyed. As the records of that West Barnstable church show, a church meeting was soon called to deal with the "iniquity" of those "disorderly persons" who caused "ye great disturbance of ye worship of God."<sup>8</sup>

That type of thing was now beginning to happen in many New England churches.

Churches, like that Barnstable church, began to struggle over whether they would retain precentor-led singing or go to the new style, which was called “Regular Singing.” Our Falmouth church records show that we used a precentor to set or tune our psalms at least as late as 1749.<sup>9</sup>

However, change was coming. In time, whether it provoked internal controversy in our church or not, our Falmouth church and all other New England Congregational churches decided, on an individual basis, to dispense with precentor-led singing. Apparently, a number of Puritan ministers were eager to have Regular Singing in order to improve the music in their services. However, many congregations were slow to accept that change.<sup>10</sup>

**2. [1772–1801]**  
**A NEW VERSION OF THE PSALMS OF DAVID:**  
**FITTED TO THE TUNES USED IN THE CHURCHES**  
 [1696, revised 1698] by Nicholas Brady and Nahum Tate

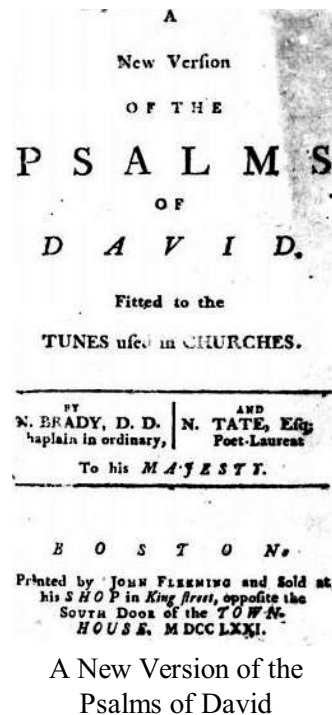
Sixty-four years after our Falmouth church was gathered, our church finally did feel the need to change its hymnal. Like many New England Congregational churches of that time, our church decided to move away from the Bay Psalm Book, the old standby. In 1772, our church purchased copies of the Brady and Tate hymnal known as “A New Version of the Psalms of David.” At that time, the Brady and Tate hymnal was already seventy-four years old.<sup>(11)</sup>

I find it ironic. In 1772, the American colonies were on the brink of revolution. However, for its worship music, our Falmouth church moved to a hymnal that was exceedingly British and Anglican. The authors of that hymnal, Nicholas Brady and Nahum Tate, were both noted Irish poets. In their day, Brady had served King William of England as Chaplain and Tate had served that king as Poet Laureate. It’s worth noting that for almost two centuries, the hymnal of Brady and Tate was “annexed to the Book of Common Prayer as the authorised Psalter of the Church of England.”<sup>12</sup> This hymnal, which our church was using, was at the heart of English Anglicanism.

What was so alluring about the hymnal of Brady and Tate that might have led our congregation to choose it in 1772?

First, that hymnal was a metric translation of the psalms, which sought to be beautiful poetry. It was less concerned about translating the psalms in a very literal way.<sup>13</sup>

Second, in contrast to the Bay Psalm Book, the hymnal of Brady and Tate could be purchased with a supplement developed in 1703 that contained hymns “of human composure.”<sup>14</sup>



It's quite possible that our congregation used that supplement. If they did, it was a big step for them to be comfortable singing hymns in their worship that weren't psalms.

That supplement contained the new hymn "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night," which is still sung today. That hymn even appears in our current Pilgrim Hymnal. However, in the late 1700s, our congregation probably didn't sing that hymn in worship because they didn't celebrate Christmas then.

The Brady and Tate hymnal did not contain tunes. However, it's been estimated that before 1800, there were fifty to seventy-five tunebooks published in New England from which congregations could draw the music for their hymns.<sup>15</sup>

It has been said that Congregational churches that moved from the Bay Psalm Book to Brady and Tate tended to be churches that were moving toward Unitarianism. I think our church was moving in that direction around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In contrast, when more orthodox Congregational churches left the Bay Psalm Book, they tended to choose the hymn book of Isaac Watts, known as "System of Praise."<sup>16</sup> Watts was an Independent in England, not an Anglican.<sup>17</sup> But I'll say more about that later.

Our Responsive Reading this morning is from the Brady and Tate translation of the 139<sup>th</sup> Psalm. I myself have appreciated the poetic beauty of this translation.

## **RESPONSIVE READING – Psalm 139 :1–13, 14, 16, 23–24**

Lay Reader

*Thou Lord, by strictest search hast known my rising up and lying down;  
My secret thoughts are known to thee, known long before conceived by me.  
Thine eye my bed and path surveys, my public haunts and private ways;  
Thou know'st what 'tis my lips would vent, my yet unuttered words' intent.  
Surrounded by thy pow'r I stand, on ev'ry side I find thy hand.  
O skill, for human reach too high! too dazzling bright for mortal eye:  
O could I so perfidious be, to think of once deserting thee,  
Where, Lord, could I thy influence shun? or whither from thy presence run?  
If up to heav'n I take my flight, 'tis there thou dwell'st enthroned in light;  
Or dive to hell's infernal plains, 'tis there almighty vengeance reigns.  
If I the morning's wings could gain, and fly beyond the western main,  
Thy swifter hand would first arrive, and there arrest thy fugitive.  
Or should I try to shun thy light beneath the sable wings of night;  
One glance from thee, one piercing ray, would kindle darkness into day.  
The veil of night is no disguise, no screen from thy all-searching eyes;  
Thru' midnight shades thou find'st thy way, as in the blazing noon of day.  
Thou know'st the texture of my heart, my reins, and ev'ry vital part;  
Each single thread in nature's loom by thee was covered in the womb.  
I'll praise thee, from whose hands I came, a work of such a curious frame;*

*The wonders thou in me hast shown, my soul with grateful joy must own.  
Thou didst the shapeless embryo see, its parts were registered by thee;  
Thou saw'st the daily growth they took, formed by the model of thy book.  
Search, try, O God, my thoughts and heart, if mischief lurks in any part;  
Correct me where I go astray, and guide me in thy perfect way.*

**3. [1801–1810]**  
**SACRED POETRY: CONSISTING OF PSALMS AND HYMNS,**  
**adapted to CHRISTIAN DEVOTION,**  
**in publick and private [1795] by Jeremy Belknap, D.D.**



Rev. Jeremy Belknap, D.D.

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, almost all New England Congregational churches were singing hymns of “human composure” as well as psalms.<sup>18</sup> In 1801, our church moved to a new hymnal commonly known as “Sacred Poetry.” It was by noted Congregational minister and historian Jeremy Belknap.<sup>(19)</sup> Our church’s choice of that hymnal is one of several clues that our congregation was moving in a Unitarian direction at that time. I say that because Belknap wanted this hymnal to appeal to both Trinitarian and non-Trinitarian Christians alike. As Belknap himself wrote in the preface to this hymnal:

*In this Selection, those Christians who do not scruple to sing praises to their Redeemer and Sanctifier, will find materials for a sublime enjoyment; whilst others whose tenderness of conscience may oblige them to confine their addresses to the Father only, will find no deficiency of matter suited to their idea of ‘the chaste and awful spirit of devotion.’*

In this period, a great split was beginning to emerge in American Congregationalism. To put it simply, more reason-oriented Congregationalists—particularly along the Massachusetts seacoast—were moving toward a Unitarian theology. That theology did not accept the divinity of Jesus. In contrast, Congregationalists, who were more emotion and spiritual experience-oriented, were maintaining Congregationalism’s long-standing belief in the Trinity and also some form of Congregationalism’s traditional Calvinist theology. In this period, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Trinitarian Congregationalists completely abandoned Harvard College. Instead, in 1807, they founded Andover Theological Seminary for the training of their Trinitarian Congregational ministers.

Our next hymn is one of the non-psalm hymns of “human composure” found in Belknap’s

hymnal. By this period, it's possible or even likely that our church had adopted Regular Singing completely. Therefore, our precentor will start us off as we all sing this hymn together a cappella. Belknap indicated that this hymn could be sung to a large number of tunes. This morning we'll sing it to the tune of Duke Street, which was only two years old when Belknap first published his hymnal in 1795. As you sing this hymn, notice its emphasis on the God-given freedom of individual consciences and its portrayal of Jesus as one who sought to persuade, not compel, religious commitment. Note also that this hymn was published shortly after our free nation was formed.

# **HYMN I [Persecution] Long Metre, x or b by Scott**

Tune: Duke Street as in "Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun,"

*Pilgrim Hymnal No. 202*

- 1. Absurd and vain attempt! to bind, with iron chains, the freeborn mind;  
To force conviction, and reclaim, the wand'ring, by destructive flame!*
- 2. Bold arrogance, to snatch from heav'n, dominion not to mortals giv'n!  
O'er conscience to usurp the throne, accountable to God alone!*
- 3. Mad zeal! That fills the world with wo! That hurls down kingdoms at a  
blow! That wakens vengeance to devour, the foes of antichristian power!*
- 4. Jesus, thy gentle law of love, does not such cruelties approve;  
Mild as thyself, thy doctrine wields, no arms, but what persuasion yields.*
- 5. By proofs divine and reason strong, it draws the willing soul along;  
And conquests to thy church acquires, by eloquence, which Heav'n inspires.*
- 6. O happy, who are thus compell'd, to the rich feast, by Jesus held!  
May we this blessing know, and prize, the light which liberty supplies.*

## **4. and 5. [1810–1864]**

### **Hymnal Revisions of the Psalms and Songs of Isaac Watts**

Likely our church used the 1785 revision by Joel Barlow or the 1800 revision by Timothy Dwight, followed by the 1819 and/or 1823 revision, often called "**Watts and Select**" by Samuel Worcester and/or its 1840 revision by Samuel's son, Samuel M. Worcester.

In the period from about 1809 to 1812, dramatic events took place in our Falmouth church and on Cape Cod. The so-called Second Great Awakening swept through our area,

rekindling religious commitment and leading many Congregationalists to return to some of the traditional spiritual values of New England Congregationalism. For example, in 1809, our Falmouth church suddenly received more than a hundred new members—a number of new admissions that has never been equaled in our church before or since.

In 1811, Rev. Henry Lincoln, our church's minister then, had a conversion experience that led him back solidly into the Trinitarian Congregational fold.<sup>20</sup> The same thing happened to a number of Cape ministers at this time. Then in 1812, in a church family home in the Quissett section of Falmouth, there was a dramatic revival, which our Falmouth congregation continued to celebrate through most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

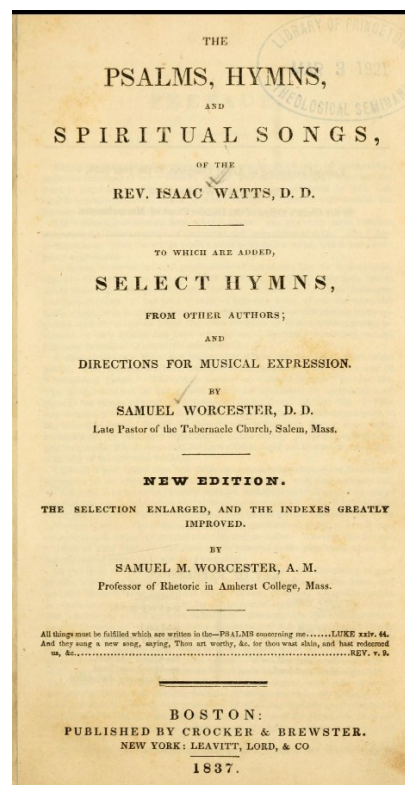
A lot happened in those few years. Thus, it comes as no surprise that in the year 1810, our church abandoned Belknap's hymnal. Instead, our church moved to one of the published revisions of Isaac Watts' hymnal, "System of Praise." As I said earlier, Watts' hymnal was the usual choice of more orthodox Congregational churches when they left the Bay Psalm Book. It seems likely that choice of a hymnal in 1810 was a reflection of our congregation's re-entry into the mainstream of Congregational churches. That mainstream professed Trinitarianism, as we in our modern Falmouth church and our United Church of Christ denomination still do.

For fifty-four years, from 1810 to 1864, our church likely used two or more different American revisions of Watt's hymnal.<sup>(21)</sup> I don't seem to be able to be more specific than that based on what I have found in our church's records. What did our congregation likely find appealing about moving to Watts' hymns, apart from their solidly Trinitarian orientation?

First, Watts made free translations of the biblical psalms for singing in his hymnal. Believing that the biblical David would have written the psalms differently if he had lived after Jesus, Watts tried to translate the psalms "as David might have done had he been an English gentleman in the early part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century."<sup>22</sup>

Second, like the hymnals of Brady and Tate and Belknap, Watts' hymnal also contained some non-psalm hymns. Among those were such classics as "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "Joy to the World," and "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past."

Americans liked Watts' hymnal, but they preferred, as did our church, to use an American revision of it. Why was that? There are at least two reasons.<sup>23</sup> First, Watts intentionally left some psalms out of his hymnal because he felt they weren't very Christian. For example, he



A revision of Isaac Watts' hymnal

left Psalm 137 out because it spoke favorably of children, specifically the children of one's enemies having their heads dashed against stones. In contrast, Americans wanted a hymn book with all the psalms in it. Second, as Isaac Watts was English, it was natural for him to include some British patriotic songs in his hymnal. In contrast, Americans wanted American patriotic songs in their hymnals to celebrate their new nation.

Timothy Dwight, noted Congregational minister and President of Yale College, wrote a revision of Watts' hymnal, which our Falmouth church may well have used. In Dwight's revision, he included hymns he had written himself. One of those hymns was "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord," which we in our Falmouth church still sing today. It's been said that hymn from Dwight is "the only American hymn to survive of all those written between 1620 and 1824."

Again, here's an irony. Earlier, I said that Watts left Psalm 137 out of his hymnal. In fact, this famous hymn by Dwight was inspired by two verses—verses 5 and 6—in that same 137<sup>th</sup> Psalm. Fortunately, those two verses said nothing about dashing the heads of enemy children against a rock. Once again, our precentor will start us all off in singing our hymn a cappella.

### **PILGRIM HYMNAL # 269 "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord"**

As the use of precentors came to an end in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and possibly later, singing schools began to be formed to provide choirs for the worship services of our Congregational churches.<sup>24</sup> I don't know when a choir first appeared in our Falmouth church. But the records of the First Congregational Society of Falmouth show that in 1836, that society paid an instructor to hold a sacred music school in Woods Hole over the course of three months. Five students paid tuition to participate in that school.

It wasn't until 1785 that an organ was ever introduced into a Congregational church in New England. That organ appeared in the First Congregational Church in Boston. It was said of that event that "never before had instrumental music been heard in a Congregational Church in New England."<sup>25</sup>

Almost 60 years later, in 1844, our Falmouth church finally introduced an organ to its worship services. That first organ in our church was a gift from Elijah Swift. He gave the organ to our church to "aid in sacred music."<sup>26</sup> Oliver Swift, a grandson of Elijah, later noted that before the gift of that organ, the instruments used in our church's worship were a big bass viol, a fiddle, a flute, and "a long instrument with a flaring end and a mouth piece like a whistle."<sup>27</sup> To give you a sense of perspective, in that year of 1844, Samuel Morse sent the first electronic telegram, and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was formed in London.

**[→ Having reached the year 1844 in our church's history, from this point on in our worship service, we will feel free to enjoy our church's choir and our organ.]**

**ANTHEM Psalm 23**



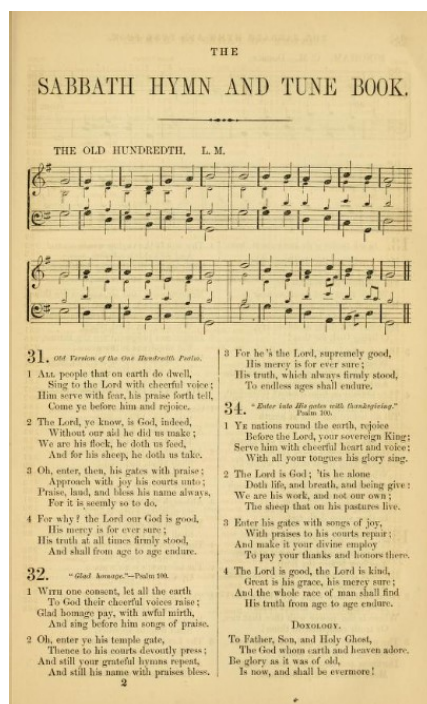
## CALL TO PRAYER

Minister: The Lord be with you.  
 Choir: And with thy spirit.  
 Minister: Let us pray: O Lord show Thy mercy upon us.  
 Choir: And grant us Thy Salvation.  
 Minister: O God, make clean our hearts within us,  
 Choir: And take not Thy Holy Spirit from us.

## MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER, PASTORAL PRAYER, CHORAL RESPONSE

### 6. [1865–1884]

**The Sabbath Hymn and Tune Book For The Service of Song in the House of the Lord** by Andover Theological Seminary professors Edwards A. Park and Austin Phelps with tunes supplied by Lowell Mason.



The Sabbath Hymn and Tune Book

In 1865, as the Civil War was drawing to an end, our church moved to a hymnal that was edited by two Andover Theological Seminary professors, Edwards A. Park and Austin Phelps. This hymnal, commonly called the “Sabbath Hymn and Tune Book,” was significant because it was largely successful in presenting “modern, bright, literary hymns.”<sup>(28)</sup> Those professors were quite knowledgeable about literature.<sup>29</sup>

This hymnal was also significant because the tunes of the famous musician Lowell Mason were included in the book for each of its hymns. Generally, a tune was placed at the top of each page. Below the tune were the words of several different hymns, each of which could be sung to the tune above it. This was a great convenience. No longer did our parishioners have to try to remember or look somewhere else for the tune of the hymn they were singing.

This hymnal was presented primarily for congregation use but could also be used by choirs. It’s interesting to note that this hymnal included both some chants based on the “primitive Anglican model” and some “short, easy Anthems.”<sup>30</sup> However, I’ve seen no evidence that our church used those chants. Also included in this hymnal was Lowell Mason’s new tune called “Bethany.” It was set to the lyrics of the hymn “Nearer My God To Thee.” In fact, that’s the familiar tune we still sing that hymn to today.<sup>31</sup>

**PILGRIM HYMNAL No. 351      “Nearer, My God, To Thee”**

**OFFERTORY**

**ANTHEM**

**\*DOXOLOGY**

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

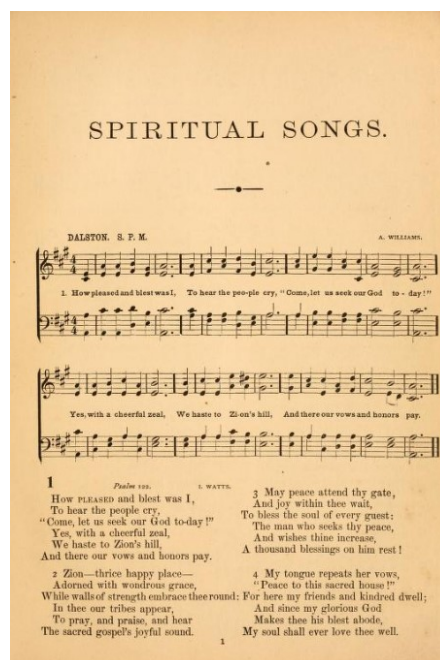
The doxology traditionally sung in our church was written by Bishop Thomas Ken in 1696 in England, as the conclusion to three of his hymns. It has been said to be “the most frequently sung words in Protestant worship.” Our congregation may have first encountered this doxology when in 1772 it began using Brady and Tate’s “New Version” hymnal in worship.<sup>32</sup>

**OFFERTORY PRAYER**

**7. [1884–1912 or later ]**  
**A Selection of Spiritual Songs with Music for the**  
**Church and the Choir** by Charles S. Robinson

In 1884, our Falmouth church joined many other Congregational churches in using the hymnal commonly called “Spiritual Songs” by Charles Robinson.<sup>(33)</sup> Robinson was a well-known Presbyterian minister and author who served the American Chapel in Paris and the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City.<sup>34</sup> About one-fifth of the hymns in this hymnal are not shown with tunes. Robinson wrote that this was done to give choirs the freedom to adapt those hymns “to tunes of their own choice.”<sup>35</sup>

In the month of October 1908, while our church was still using “Spiritual Songs,” our Falmouth church celebrated its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The noted poet, Katharine Lee Bates, whose father had been one of our church’s ministers, wrote special lyrics for a hymn to celebrate that event and the proud heritage of our Christian church. Katharine named that hymn “Our Church.”<sup>36</sup>



Spiritual Songs

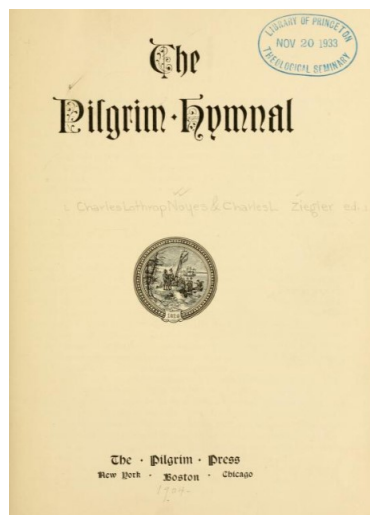
**HYMN “Our Church”**

Tune: All Saints New

Written by Katharine Lee Bates for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Our Church.[For the words of her hymn, see Appendix IX – “300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sunday: October 26, 2008” in this book.]

**8. [1912 or later to 1933 or later]**  
**The Pilgrim Hymnal with Responsive Readings**  
**and other Aids to Worship [1912]**

American Congregationalists did not form a national denomination until 1871. That was very late, compared to a number of other American Protestant churches. That lateness was in part due to the fear of local Congregational churches that a national denomination would infringe upon their local autonomy. However, as American society became more complex in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it became clear that such a national denomination was needed.

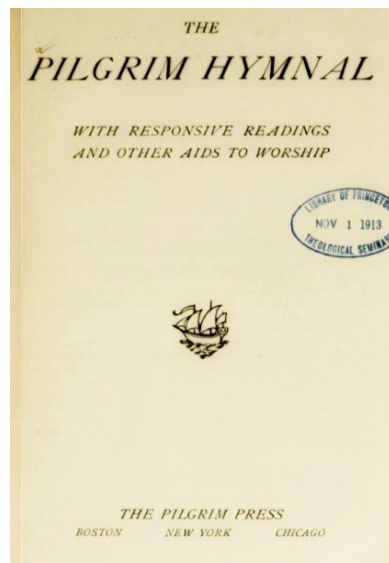


The Pilgrim Hymnal, 1904

As the years passed, that national denomination and groups associated with it began to publish hymnals for our local Congregational churches. One of those denominational hymnals was published in 1904. It was called “The Pilgrim Hymnal.”<sup>(37)</sup> Not long afterwards, in the year 1912, that hymnal was revised, and that revision was still called “The Pilgrim Hymnal.”<sup>(38)</sup>

In fact, it was that second Pilgrim Hymnal of 1912 that our Falmouth church moved to in 1912, or somewhat after that. One notable thing about that 1912 Pilgrim Hymnal was that it included some songs from the Social Gospel movement of that period. Instead of just the

salvation of individuals, that movement also focused on the salvation of society and Christians working together in cities, slums, rural communities, and elsewhere to build the Kingdom of God on earth. That 1912 Pilgrim Hymnal was the first of our church’s hymnals, which contained Katharine Lee Bates’ hymn “America the Beautiful” as well as “The Star Spangled Banner.” It was also our church’s first hymnal to contain so-called “aids to worship,” such as responsive readings, confessions, prayers, and calls to worship. That reflected the fact that, at the end of the 1800s, many Congregational churches began to include readings from the pews in their worship services.



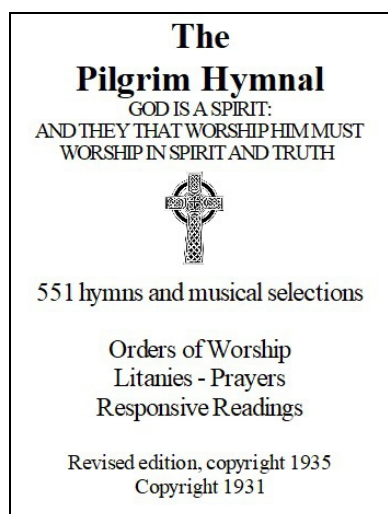
The Pilgrim Hymnal, 1912

Congregational minister Washington Gladden was a key Social Gospel leader and contributor to that 1912 hymnal. Our Falmouth church was first exposed to Gladden's famous hymn "O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee" in this 1912 Pilgrim Hymnal. Let's sing it.

### **PILGRIM HYMNAL No. 418      "O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee"**

You might be interested to know that in 1914, the First Congregational Society of Falmouth voted to pay the organ blower 75 cents per week instead of the usual \$25 per year.<sup>39</sup> Presumably, a lever was used then to pump air into our church's organ. But then, in 1932, our church installed an electric blower for the organ.<sup>40</sup>

### **9. [likely 1935 or later to 1961] The Pilgrim Hymnal [revised 1935 from 1931 edition]**



The Pilgrim Hymnal, 1935  
(description)

In 1931, American Congregationalists published yet another hymnal, which they also called "The Pilgrim Hymnal." Four years later, in 1935, that hymnal was revised, and it still bore the same name.<sup>41(42)</sup> As best as I can tell, our Falmouth church moved to that new and revised 1935 Pilgrim Hymnal in the year of its publication or somewhat later.

I'll mention three significant things about that 1935 Pilgrim Hymnal. First, it was the first hymnal in our Falmouth church that contained all or most of a hymn's words within the G and Bass Clefs of the hymn. Second, as Luther A. Weigle noted in the preface of this hymnal, it contained "more hymns of the social gospel than any former book has contained, with no less provisions for the gospel of personal evangelism and private devotion."<sup>43</sup> Third, this hymnal also had a section of litanies to be read by congregations, such as a Litany of Thanksgiving, a Litany for the Daily Round, and a Litany of Sympathy. Led by

our lay reader, let's now read the opening section of the Litany for Students from that 1935 hymnal.

### **LITANY FOR STUDENTS**

Lay Reader

Lay Reader:    Eternal God, who hast promised us the liberty which follows after truth, grant that keeping the commandments of Christ, we may have the mind of Christ and be free, as he was free. For all who guard the truths which were known of old, that, as good stewards of that knowledge, they may confirm us in simple and righteous living:

Congregation: We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.

Lay Reader: For those who seek for new truth, that, believing more light is yet to break, they may be sustained in their searching by the faith that thou art, and that thou art the rewarder of them that diligently seek thee:

Congregation: We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.

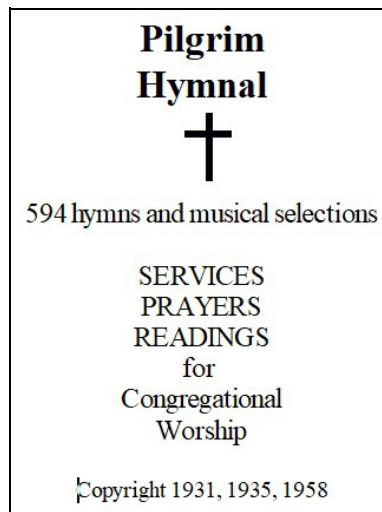
Lay Reader: For all scientists, looking upon the face of nature, that they may see order in its variety and law in its constancy, and may teach men to live upon earth in confidence and without fear:

Congregation: We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.

**10. [1961 to 2010]  
The Pilgrim Hymnal [1958]**

In 1958, our Congregational-Christian national denomination, which was then in the process of becoming the United Church of Christ, published a new version of the Pilgrim Hymnal. In 1960, our Church Council approved the purchase of those hymnals for our church.

Compared to the 1935 Pilgrim Hymnal that preceded it, this 1958 hymnal includes more 20<sup>th</sup>-century hymns. Also, this hymnal took “a good look . . . at the hymnody of the ethnic New Churches.”<sup>44</sup> This version of the Pilgrim Hymnal became a favorite of many Congregational heritage churches, including our own. In the 1990s, our deacons considered switching to the “New Century Hymnal,” which began to be published then by the United Church of Christ. Ultimately, it was decided to continue using the 1958 Pilgrim Hymnal but also add selected New Century Hymnal hymns to our worship through the use of worship bulletin inserts.

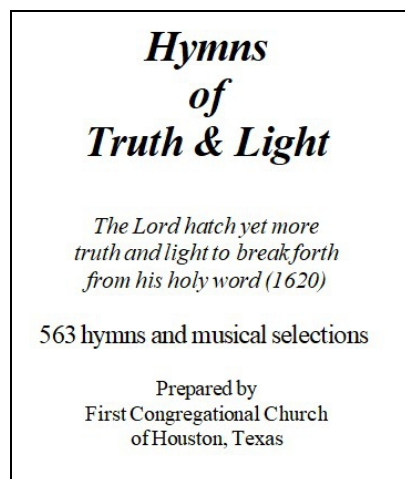


The Pilgrim Hymnal, 1958  
(description)

**11. [Addendum to 2010]  
Hymns of Truth & Light [1998]**

In 2010, our church began to use “Hymns of Truth & Light,” a hymnal that was specially





Hymns of Truth & Light, 1998  
(description)

created by four United Church of Christ churches as an alternative to the denomination's New Century Hymnal.

<sup>45</sup>Hymns of Truth & Light focuses on our Congregational heritage. In fact, its title comes from the words of Rev. John Robinson, the Pastor of the Pilgrims. As he said to members of his congregation [the Pilgrims] as they prepared to set sail from Holland to the New World,

*The Lord hath yet more truth and light to break forth from his holy word.*

Those famous words that anticipate new understandings and new hopes for the future have long been a watchword for persons of Congregational heritage.

A special feature of this hymnal is that our church has been able to customize it by having a number of items bound in it that are specific to our church. Such additions include: a brief history of our church; twenty-five of our congregation's favorite hymns not already in this hymnal; and also the hymn "Our Church," which Katharine Lee Bates wrote for our church's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

As you can see, our church has come a long way in its use of hymns in worship over our 300 year history. And now we are entering our fourth century with a brand new hymnal. And yet, in the centuries ahead, regardless of whatever hymnal our church chooses to use, it still comes down to what Katharine said so eloquently to us 100 years ago in the special hymn she wrote for our church. As she wrote:

*"Only Love can build the church, whose cornerstone is Christ."*

**\*HYMN No. 440 "O Beautiful for Spacious Skies"**

**\*BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE**

**\*POSTLUDE**

## ENDNOTES

1. Horton Davies, *The Worship of the American Puritans* (Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1990), 124–126.

2. Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, II, B. v, 228 as quoted in Davies, 129.

3. Stephen Daye

([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_Whole\\_Booke\\_of\\_Psalms,\\_printed\\_in\\_1640,\\_title](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Whole_Booke_of_Psalms,_printed_in_1640,_title))

\_page.jpg), *The Whole Booke of Psalms*, printed in 1640, title page,” marked as public domain, Wikimedia Commons: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Template:PD-old>.

Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

4. Charles L. Atkins, “American Congregationalists And Their Hymnals,” *Bulletin of the American Congregational Association*, Vol. 2., January 1951, No. 2, 3–4.

5. Davies, 127–139.

6. Harry Eskew and Hugh McElrath, *Sing With Understanding* (Nashville: Church Street Press, 2nd edition, 1995), quoted in “Hymnology: English Metrical Psalmody Introduction,” [www.smithcreekmusic.com/Hymnology/Metrical.Psalmsody/English.psalmsody.intro.html](http://www.smithcreekmusic.com/Hymnology/Metrical.Psalmsody/English.psalmsody.intro.html)

7. Atkins, 5.

8. *Records of the West Parish of Barnstable, Massachusetts, 1668–1807* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1924).

9. *FCC1*, April 12, 1749 meeting, 31,

*After Lecture ye Church being staid, Brother Theodorus Morss was Chosen (by manual Vote of the Brethren) to Set, or Tune the Psalm (in ye Publick Assembly) in ye Room of Brother Ezekiel Eldred, who desired to be excused from that Service (to which he had formerly been Chosen) by reason of his Troubles & infirmity.*

10. Linda R. Ruggles, “The Regular Singing Controversy: The Case Against Lining-Out,” *The Early America Review*, Fall 1997. <http://www.earlyamerica.com/review/fall97/sing.html>

11. The picture of the title page of a Brady and Tate hymnal is in the public domain. [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1771\\_Psalms\\_of\\_David\\_JohnFleeming\\_Boston.png](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1771_Psalms_of_David_JohnFleeming_Boston.png)

12. Rev. James King, *Anglican Hymnology: Being an Account of the 325 Standard Hymns of the Highest Merit According To the Verdict of the Whole Anglican Church* (London: Hatchards, Piccadilly, 1885), 134–135.

13. Atkins, 6.

14. Atkins, 6. The supplement bore the title “The Appendix, with Hymns,” King, 135.

15. Atkins, 5.

16. Isaac Watt’s “System of Praise” included: “Hymns and Songs,” 1797–1709; “Divine and Moral Songs for Children,” 1715; and “Psalms of David Imitated,” 1719. Atkins, 6.

17. Atkins, 6.

18. Atkins, 8.



19. Portrait of clergyman and American historian Jeremy Belknap (1744–1798) by Henry Sargent (1770–1845). Oil on canvas, date: 1798, ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jeremy\\_belknap\\_by\\_sargent.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jeremy_belknap_by_sargent.jpg)), Jeremy Belknap by Sargent,” marked as public domain, more details on Wikimedia Commons: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Template:PD-old>.

20. Rev. Charles H. Washburn. “Historical Address Covering the 200 Years’ History of the First Congregational Church in Falmouth, Mass.,” 1708–1908, *Two Hundredth Anniversary, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts. October 11, 12 and 13, 1908 (1908)*, 30, 35–36.

21. The image is of the title page of Rev. Samuel M. Worcester, D. D., *The Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs of the Rev. Isaac Watts, D.D. : To Which Are Added, Select Hymns, From Other Authors, And Directions For Musical Expression – by Samuel Worcester, D. D.* (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1837).  
<https://archive.org/details/hymnri00watt>

22. Atkins, 6.

23. Atkins 6–7.

24. Davies, 301. Davies indicates that the formation of these singing schools began about 1720 and that clergy took the lead in their formation.

25. Benson J. Lossing, *Harper’s Popular Cyclopaedia of United States History from the Aboriginal Period to 1876, Containing Brief Sketches of Important Events and Conspicuous Actors* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1881), 484.

26. FCC3, January 3, 1845 annual meeting, 115. It was noted that “during the year an organ has been purchased to aid in sacred music”; Washburn, 34.

27. Oliver Franklin Swift, *Oliver Franklin Swift Reminiscences*, [1900 or somewhat later], 11–12. The Falmouth Historical Society has a photocopy of this typed manuscript in book form, given by “a descendant of O. F. Swift, Grosvenor Swift, Florida.”

Washburn, 34. Washburn also speaks there of Francis Nye of North Falmouth leading a singing school in the vestry upstairs above the church’s main entrance. That was the room created when the church added on to the front of its sanctuary building in 1839.

28. Lowell Mason, Edwards A. Park, Austin Phelps, *The Sabbath Hymn and Tune Book, for The Service of Song in the House of the Lord* (New York: Mason Brothers, Publishers, 1859), 17.  
<https://archive.org/details/sabbathhymntuneb00maso/page/17/mode/1up>

29. Atkins, 12–13.

30. Mason, Park, Phelps, VII.

31. Atkins, 12–13.

32. Albert C. Ronander and Ethel K. Porter, *Guide to the Pilgrim Hymnal* (Boston: United Church Press, 1966), 29–30, 385.

33. Charles S. Robinson, *A Selection of Spiritual Songs with Music for the Church and the Choir* (New York: Scribner & Co., 1878), 1.

<https://archive.org/details/selectionofspi00robi/page/1/mode/1up>

34. James Grant and John Fiske (ed.), *Appletons' Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1888), vol. V, 283; Atkins, 13.

35. Rev. Charles S. Robinson, *A Selection of Spiritual Songs With Music For the Church and the Choir* (New York: The Century Co., 1881). “Preface: 1883.”

<https://archive.org/details/ASelectionOfSpiritualSongs/page/n9/mode/1up>

36. Katharine Lee Bates, “Anniversary Hymn: Our Church,” *1708–1908, Two Hundredth Anniversary, First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Massachusetts. October 11, 12 and 13, 1908* (1908), 10.

37. Charles L. Noyes, Charles L. Ziegler (ed.), *The Pilgrim Hymnal* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1904).

<https://archive.org/details/pilgrimhymnal00noye/page/n5/mode/2up>

38. Charles L. Noyes, Charles L. Ziegler (ed.), *The Pilgrim Hymnal With Responsive Readings and other Aids to Worship* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1912).

<https://archive.org/details/pilgrimhymnalwit00noye/page/n3/mode/2up>

39. *FCS4*, January 8, 1914 meeting, 117.

40. *FCS4*, January 25, 1932 meeting, 257.

41. Atkins, 15–16.

42. Sidney A. Weston, *The Pilgrim Hymnal* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, revised edition, copyright 1935; copyright 1931).

43. Sidney A. Weston, iii.

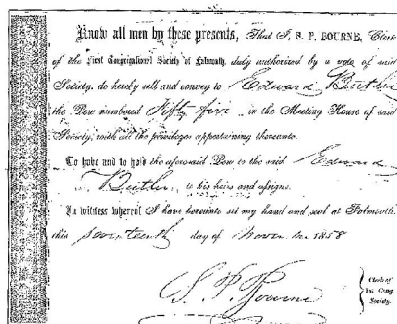
44. Charles L. Atkins, “Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs,” *Bulletin of the Congregational Library*, May 1965, Vol. 16, No. 3, 10.

45. First Congregational Church of Houston, Texas, *Hymns of Truth & Light* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Sheridan Books, 1998).

## Chapter 23 – We Become a Free Church: Pews and Pledging

### An Expanded Sermon

In our modern day, we Christians of Congregational heritage take for granted such things as the support of our church through free pledges, the taking of a free will offering during our worship, and entirely free seating in our meeting houses. But such things were not always a part of the lives of many Congregational churches.



1858 deed to pew No. 55  
sold to Edward Butler  
Courtesy of  
Falmouth Historical Society

[This chapter views those matters largely from the perspective of our Falmouth church. However, it is likely that many Congregational churches, particularly in Massachusetts, had experiences with these issues that were similar to those of our Falmouth church. The scripture text chosen for this sermon was James 2:1–7, which deals with seating at Christian worship. As parishioners entered the sanctuary the morning I gave this sermon, they discovered that nearly all the pews on the main floor and balcony of our church had signs on them indicating who owned each pew in 1875. For many who attended that day, the words “Excuse me, but you’re sitting in my pew!” seemed to hang in the air, just waiting to be spoken from the past.<sup>1]</sup>

## The Church of Christ in Falmouth

This morning I’m going to tell you some things about our Falmouth church, which you may find of interest. Many years ago, from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the needs and administration of our church were met by two different organizations. That was very typical of New England Congregational churches in those years.

One of those two organizations was our church itself, which was originally known as The Church of Christ in Falmouth.<sup>2</sup> Our church oversaw its own spiritual life, covenant, religious education, sacraments, and voluntary financial support of Christian charities and mission work. Members of our church were required to profess the Christian faith, have knowledge of God’s promises unto salvation as revealed in Holy Scripture, be baptized, give evidence of Christian faith experience—usually a conversion experience<sup>3</sup>—and live a moral life as defined by the faith community. Men and women were members of the church. However, as an organization, the church had no legal standing under Massachusetts law.

## First Congregational Society of Falmouth

The other organization connected with our church was called the First Congregational Society of Falmouth. That society did have legal standing in Massachusetts. In fact, there were Commonwealth laws specifically written to regulate Congregational societies like the one

connected with our church. Typical of all such societies [or “parishes” as they were sometimes known], our Congregational society controlled all the financial aspects of our church’s life, with the exception of voluntary mission giving. For example, the society funded, built, and owned the buildings our church congregation worshiped in. The society set the minister’s compensation. It also had responsibility for funding and directing the church’s music program.

For a long time, only men twenty-one years of age and older could be legal, voting members of this society. Congregational society members were expected to support their church, both financially and otherwise. But, unlike members of the church, society members often were not required to make any faith profession at all.<sup>4</sup>

Whenever a new minister was called, both the church and its society had to agree on the person chosen. If the society voted against the church’s choice of a minister or if the society was unwilling to pay a minister a sufficient salary, the church was powerless to do anything about it.

Usually there was considerable crossover between those two organizations. Many Congregational society members were also members of the church their society was connected to, but others were not. Some Congregationalists expressed concern that instead of having a strong spiritual interest in the church, some non-church members in those societies really had more interest in the power and community prestige that such a connection with the church afforded them.<sup>5</sup> However, to whatever extent that concern was justified or not among Congregational churches overall, it seems that our own church and society in Falmouth got along fairly well with each other through the years. They did have some differences. Even so, they both seem to have had the best interests of the church and its ministries at heart. Such harmony between a church and its society was not always found.

The Trinitarian/Unitarian split that divided many eastern Massachusetts Congregational churches in the early 1800s was very often a split between a Congregational church and its society or parish. In such splits in Massachusetts, it was the society, not the church, that had the legal right to keep the church building, all invested funds, and even the communion ware that the congregation had used in its worship. A famous 1820 Dedham court case made that clear.<sup>6</sup> For more information, see Chapter 16 – “Town, Church, and the First Congregational Society of Falmouth” in this book.

### **Church Support Through Town Taxation**

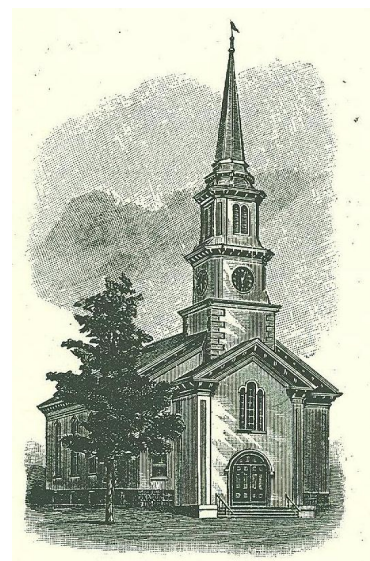
In the days before 1834, when the separation of church and state became the law in Massachusetts, those societies were set up to represent the town and oversee the town’s tax dollars, which they often used to support a Congregational church in their town.<sup>7</sup> Once the separation of church and state was adopted, those societies no longer worked with town tax dollars. However, they often continued to act like a town tax committee, in that they assessed the estates of their own society members and taxed them accordingly to support the church they still had some responsibility for. Knowing the basic difference between our church and its

Congregational society years ago is helpful for understanding the rest of this story.

When the Pilgrims and the Massachusetts Bay colonists first came to this new world, they expected that their churches would be funded by voluntary donations. Church deacons received contributions at the meeting house on the Sabbath. Sometimes they even went door to door in their parishes to solicit donations. Yet, in time, it was discovered that such voluntary support was not adequate. Thus, both the Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth colonies enacted laws in 1654 and 1657, respectively, to fund their ministers' salaries through town taxation.<sup>8</sup> Over time, that connection between church and state gave rise to the dual church and society system, which I just described.<sup>9</sup>

### **New Pews in Our 1857 Moved and Renovated Church**

In the year 1857, the First Congregational Society of Falmouth moved its meeting house off the Village Green to its position today. It's interesting to note that the society's records refer to that triangle of land as the Meeting House Green,<sup>10</sup> not the Village Green as it is called today. In addition to moving their meeting house and lifting it up to create a vestry beneath it, the society repaired and remodeled their building considerably. For example, the old pulpit, galleries, and pews were taken down and rebuilt.<sup>11</sup> To meet the fashion of that day, the church's old box pews were dispensed with, the society compensating the owners for their appraised value, and the so-called "slip" pews, most of which we still have today, were both installed and numbered, from 1 to 94.



1892 Sketch of our Church

Four pews in the new gallery of our church then were reserved for the use of the choir. And one pew, No. 45 on the main floor, was set aside for the parsonage family. All the rest of those pews were appraised at a high enough value to cover all the society's expenses in rebuilding this meeting house.

Then, on Wednesday, September 16, 1857, at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon, the society began auctioning off those new pews to the highest bidders. Those pews could be paid for in four installments over the course of 24 months. Once the payments were completed, the society issued a legal deed to the pew to the purchaser.<sup>12</sup>

A pew deed was considered personal property under Massachusetts law of that time. Deed owners could pass them down to their descendants in their estates. They could also sell them to others. In principle, deed owners had a "qualified right" to their pews, not an absolute right. Their right was usually superseded by the right of the society that owned the building the pew was in.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Congregational societies could dispense with their old pews and old meeting houses and

build new ones. In the process, societies compensated old pew owners for their loss and sold the new pews to help meet their expenses. It appears that societies could also prevent the sale of pews in their meeting houses to unrepentant souls they deemed undesirable.

There was, however, the following bizarre case in 1842. It seems that a Massachusetts pew owner boarded up his pew, so no one else could possibly sit in it during a secular 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration in his church. Because of the unusual by-laws of that particular society, the court made a judgment in that man's favor. The court decreed that he had the legal right to board up his pew so others couldn't use it during non-religious events held in his church.<sup>14</sup> That finding was not the norm, however. Typically, pew owners were also required to pay ongoing taxes on their pews to the society they purchased them from. If, over time, pew owners failed to make those additional payments, the society usually revoked their pew ownership.

Within the space of a few years after that 1857 auction, the First Congregational Society of Falmouth was able to sell almost all its pews to the highest bidders. Very few pews were rented. Also, it didn't seem to matter if the purchasers were actual church members or not. It likely was a highly coveted status symbol in our community then to be able to say that one owned a pew in our newly moved and remodeled meeting house.

In our modern day, we are accustomed to free and open seating in our church and the principle of "first come, first served." Frankly, we wouldn't have it any other way. But that's not the way it was in the Congregational churches of years gone by.

Even in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, New England Congregationalists were inclined to arrange church seating so their most socially prominent and respected worshipers were located in the "best" pews. That was done differently in different churches, but such factors as pedigree, public office, piety, wealth, and age, were often taken into consideration.<sup>15</sup> A committee was elected to establish this "pecking order." And this process of selection was approvingly referred to as "dignifying" the meeting house."<sup>16</sup> Of course, the work of those selection committees could be quite controversial, especially among those who were not chosen to sit in the "best" meeting house seats. We need to remember that early Congregationalists came to America out of a culture steeped in an aristocratic view of life. It took time for New England's Congregationalism to rid itself fully of some of those aristocratic impulses.

The First Congregational Society of Falmouth funded itself through the sale of its pews. Likely, it also imposed an ongoing tax on those pews, once sold. But that's not all it did. After the separation of church and state in Massachusetts and town tax dollars were no longer received, the society also levied a yearly tax on the estates of its members to cover its expenses. Just like the town, the society elected and paid assessors to appraise the value of each society member's estate. The society then set its tax rate each year, in accordance with its anticipated expenses for that year. Society members were also required to pay a set, yearly poll tax to the society.

Women, such as widows who were heads of their households, were allowed to own pews.

If they did, the society likely taxed their estates too. But it wasn't until later that women were actually allowed to become members of our Congregational society and eligible to vote in society affairs. Typically, the society also elected a collector each year. That collector was remunerated by receiving a percentage of the money collected, just as the town collector did for collecting the town's taxes. For many years, that percentage was 2% for the society's collector.<sup>17</sup> Also, members who paid their society tax by a certain date were often given a discount.

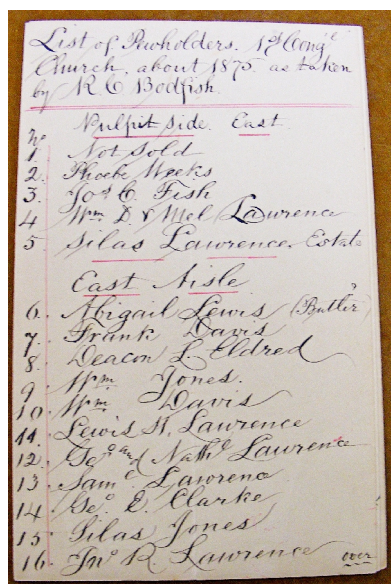
In the early years after the separation of church and state, the support of our church was largely a closed system. In practice, it was basically the same people and families paying whatever rate of taxation was calculated for them that particular year.

### Imagining Rev. Henry Craig in 1875

Now I come to the point where I invite you to use your imagination. If you will, imagine that it is the year 1875 here in our Falmouth church. Imagine also that I am Rev. Henry Craig. I was called to serve our church just a few years ago. I'm a native of Augusta, Maine. I'm a graduate of Bowdoin College and Andover Theological Seminary. It is Sunday morning. The winter sun shines in through our church windows. I am about to begin my sermon. I look out over our church's pews. Suddenly, I see that there are some problems!

[Rev. Craig walks down the center aisle of the church to address the occupant of Pew No. 45.]

*Excuse me, I don't wish to be rude. But do you realize that you are sitting in the pastor's pew, number 45? That pew has long been reserved for the parsonage family. You're lucky that my wife Chris is in the JML Care Center this morning, recovering from a full knee replacement. That's our pew, but I guess you can sit there, but just for today.*



Beginning of R. C. Bodfish's  
pew list from about 1875

[Rev. Craig walks down the center aisle, to sit beside someone in Pews Numbers 40–42 or 29–31.]

*Excuse me, I notice that you are new here. Do you realize that you are sitting in one of the most expensive pews in our church? Our Congregational Society says this pew is worth at least \$220 dollars—that's well over \$3,000 dollars in modern money. I don't wish to be rude, but finances have been a little tight around our church this past year. We really do need to get the full value for this pew.*

*—Do you have much cash with you? You can pay for it in four installments, you know.*

*—Oh, you don't want to spend that amount!*

*Perhaps I should tell you that the pews in our gallery are much cheaper than the pews on the main floor. And, the*



*cheapest pews of all—well, they’re on the post office side of our gallery. It seems that many people don’t like the morning sun streaming in upon them there.*

*—Oh, you don’t think you could afford even one of those?*

*Well, in that case, maybe some kind souls will let you sit with them in their pew here on the main floor. Our church used to have a pew or two set aside for poor people. But, for some strange reason, hardly anyone ever sat in them. So, to be economical, our society did away with them.<sup>18</sup>*

*On second thought, I think there are a few unsold pews in our gallery. If you talk with our society, perhaps they’d be willing to rent one of those pews to you cheaply, on a month-by-month basis. I hope you’re able to climb all the stairs. I’m sorry to say it, but, I guess the other option you have is to stay home.*

*—But, we’ll let you sit in this expensive pew, just this one Sunday.*

*[Rev. Craig finds an empty pew, then speaks to the Congregation referring to the actual 1875 pew owner’s name.]*

*Pew No. \_\_\_\_ is the pew of \_\_\_\_\_. It’s said that he has deeds both to this pew and to a pew in the Methodist church down the street. \_\_\_\_\_ usually worships in his pew at the Methodist church, not here.*

*I’m told that \_\_\_\_\_ really didn’t want me to become our church’s minister. Instead, he wanted a big name preacher from the big city—which I’m not. The rumor is that \_\_\_\_\_ wanted such a preacher, so the value of his pew would go way up, and he could then sell it on the open market and make a nice profit for himself.*

*[Rev. Craig returns to the Pulpit]*

What you’ve just witnessed is a caricature. Rev. Craig probably never did say such things in our church. However, those encounters do reveal some of the problems with purchased pews and the Congregationalism of his day and earlier. In the 1860s, Massachusetts Congregationalists were beginning to have a strong interest in bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to the many non-churchgoers who were then in the Commonwealth. But there were problems.

As was true of our Falmouth church at that time,<sup>19</sup> it seems likely that a number of Massachusetts Congregational churches then did not have many unsold pews available to rent to newcomers on Sunday mornings. Also, any pews available for rent were often too expensive for less affluent people.<sup>20</sup>

### **From Taxation to Voluntary Pledging and Worship Offerings**

In the 1860s, only a few Congregational societies had experimented with the idea of having both totally free pews and free will offerings to support their annual budget.<sup>21</sup> Pew purchases, pew rentals, and the taxation of society members seem to have been the usual ways societies funded themselves then.

In 1866, our Congregational society voted to put two coats of paint on our church. However, being frugal Yankees, they only voted to put one coat of paint on the church's back end.<sup>22</sup> When you know that ultimately you will be taxed for every bucket of paint you use, it's amazing how conservative you can be.

In 1875, the year of my portrayal of Rev. Craig, the members of our Congregational society were taxed twice. They were taxed to provide \$1,200 for their society's annual budget and another \$350 to help liquidate their debt. They were then in the process of building a parsonage for their minister.<sup>23</sup>

In this period, most Congregational churches did not take an offering as part of their morning worship.<sup>24</sup> Taxation, pew purchases, and pew rentals made such free offerings unnecessary. What they did seem to have, however, was one or more stationary collection boxes, located near the entrance to their church.<sup>25</sup> Those boxes were used largely for missions and charitable giving.<sup>26</sup>

Each year, our church—not our society—designated what those charitable collections would support. That was done on a monthly basis. For example, November collections in our church in 1875 were dedicated to help widows and orphans. Collections for the other months of that year were used to support foreign missions, Bible distribution, the education of freed slaves in the South, struggling churches in Massachusetts and out West, Sabbath schools, and a mission to seamen.<sup>27</sup> Much of that charitable giving was to predominantly Congregational missionary organizations, which many Congregational churches of that period supported.<sup>28</sup>

In the year 1875, our church had 207 resident members. There was only 1 excommunication. And our mission contributions totaled almost \$700.<sup>29</sup> At that time, our church and the Wellfleet church were the largest Congregational churches on Cape Cod.<sup>30</sup> And our church's mission giving was, by far, the largest of any of them.<sup>31</sup>

In the years 1878 and 1879, the additional expense of building a parsonage led our society to solicit and receive contributions by subscription from some people who were not members of their society.<sup>32</sup>

In 1881, the Society began taxing its members' estates at the rate of 38 cents for each 100 dollars owned and \$1.50 for their poll tax.<sup>33</sup>

In 1887, Massachusetts enacted a new statute that allowed churches themselves to become incorporated. Thus, Massachusetts churches could now have legal standing in the Commonwealth. Once a church was incorporated, its society or parish was no longer needed to represent it legally. From 1887 to 1890, forty-six of the Massachusetts Congregational churches then listed in the Congregational Year-Book took advantage of that 1887 change in the law and became incorporated. Those churches were listed as the following in 1891.<sup>34</sup>

**1887** (6 churches)

Fall River, French  
 Oakham  
 Oxford  
 Somerville, Prospect Hill  
 Southboro, *Southville*  
 Wilmington

**1888** (9 churches)

Boston, *Dorchester*, Harvard  
 Boston, *Dorchester*, Bethany  
 Buckland  
 Holden  
 Millbury, First  
 Montague, *Millers Falls*  
 Ware, French  
 Westboro  
 Worcester, Park

**1889** (10 churches)

Auburn  
 Boston, Olivet  
 Charlton  
 Framingham, *South*  
 Groveland  
 Middleboro, Central  
 Norfolk  
 Rockland  
 Rowley  
 Springfield, Eastern Avenue

**1890** (21 churches)

Ashburnham, First  
 Boston, *Charlestown*, Winthrop  
 Boston, *Dorchester*, Pilgrim  
 Concord  
 Danvers, First  
 Dover  
 Framingham, First  
 Haverhill, Riverside  
 Hawley  
 Hyde Park, *Clarendon Hills*  
 Lawrence, United

Milton, First  
 Newton, *Highlands*  
 Plymouth, Pilgrimage  
 Springfield, Sanford St. (in 1891 called St. John's)  
 Springfield, Park  
 Sudbury  
 Wareham  
 Worcester, Covenant  
 Worcester, Hope  
 Worcester, Belmont

The 1891 Congregational Year-Book with statistics for 1890 indicated that there were 565 Congregational churches in Massachusetts then.<sup>35</sup> Thus, about 0.0814 percent of those churches were incorporated by 1890. Over time, most Congregational churches in the Commonwealth took that step, though our own Falmouth church did not do so until 1936.

In 1888, the First Congregational Society of Falmouth did a significant thing. It formed a committee to investigate the possibility of supporting their annual budget through freely made pledges in lieu of the society's long-standing practice of taxing its own members. That committee brought back the report that people would pledge enough to support the society's budget. But there was this stipulation. A number of individuals said they would make that free pledge only if there was a "change in the Pastorate"!<sup>36</sup>

Poor Rev. Henry Craig! By now he had been serving our church for about seventeen years. There's an indication in our church's records that Rev. Craig may have been ill at this time. Within a two-month period, Rev. Craig's resignation was received and accepted by both our church and our society.<sup>37</sup>

So it was that the freedom of voluntary pledging finally began to be practiced in our church. That was the year 1888. Given the Massachusetts statute change in 1887 that allowed

church incorporations, one is tempted to speculate that our Congregational society was already beginning to wonder if its days might be numbered.

### **Initial Steps Toward Free Pews**

Two years later, in 1890, our society appears to have had its first election of ushers to assist at Sunday worship.<sup>38</sup> It seems that by now, more pews in our church were available for the society to rent out. Thus, ushers were needed to help people locate those specific pews that could be rented. Things were changing. Before this time, almost every pew was owned, and everyone knew where their own pew was. So, there wasn't much need for ushers. Apparently, they weren't expecting a great many guests or strangers then.

In this 1890 period, Falmouth was a very small community of about 2,500 people, like many Commonwealth towns then.<sup>39</sup> In contrast, Congregational churches in Massachusetts' large cities likely expected more guests at their worship and were likely better prepared to receive them.<sup>40</sup>

In that same year, 1890, The Church of the Pilgrimage in Plymouth did two amazing things.<sup>41</sup> First, they switched to voluntary offerings. As part of that, they put collection boxes in their pews, not at their doors, as before. And they made the collection of the offering an actual part of their worship service. At the time, that was an innovation not practiced in most Massachusetts Congregational churches. That same year, The Church of the Pilgrimage became one of the earliest Congregational churches to be incorporated in Massachusetts.

Second, instead of selling and renting their pews, the Church of the Pilgrimage began letting people use their church's pews freely without any charge. That was another innovation. Those experiments in Plymouth proved to be quite successful. And they were noticed.

Two years later, in 1892, the General Association of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts [a forerunner of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ] urged all its churches to adopt some system of offerings in which the whole congregation would be asked to participate. Further, the Association urged that those offerings should be included in Sabbath worship services. The Association was interested in seeing both mission giving and giving for local church support included in those offerings.<sup>42</sup> In the words of the following year's "1893 Annual Report of the General Association":

*Christians of every name are recognizing more generally the truth taught in the scriptures that they are the Lord's stewards.*<sup>43</sup>

In that same year, 1893, our society in Falmouth began to try to buy back its pews whenever those pews came up for sale, either privately or on the open market.<sup>44</sup> The society did that so they would have more pews available to rent out. Apparently, they were now expecting more newcomers. The following year, in 1894, our society appointed a committee to see about

“making the pews in the meeting house free for one year.” That committee’s final report was summed up in one word. That word was “inexpedient.”<sup>45</sup>

We don’t know why that committee thought as it did. Perhaps they were concerned about the confusion that might be created if the pews were made free for a single year? Perhaps they were concerned about the rights and/or feelings of those who still owned pews? Perhaps they still felt the need to collect the pew rents that remained? Another possibility is that they were concerned that free pews would break up families if they came to church and found that some of the seats they usually sat in together were already occupied. As strange as it might sound, that was a strong concern of some who opposed free pews in our Congregational churches at that time.<sup>46</sup>

By 1895, or earlier, our church was probably including an offering in its Sunday services. And, by 1895, it was using an envelope system for offerings.<sup>47</sup> However, our church’s pews were still not free.

In 1902, Mrs. D. H. Bowman put her pew up for sale in Falmouth’s local “*Enterprise*” newspaper. She advertised it, the way one might advertise a car or lawn tractor for sale in that same newspaper today. Incidentally, Mrs. Bowman was trying to sell pew No. 46, the one right behind the Minister’s pew.<sup>48</sup> In 1904, our society voted once again to buy back pews—in order to rent them for the society’s benefit.<sup>49</sup>

### **Final Steps to Free Pews and the Growing Role and Importance of Women**

In 1919, Miss Celia L. Rogers gave pews No. 39 and No. 79 back to the society, one on the main floor and one in the gallery. But she did so with a condition. Those pews were now to be free seats, which anyone could use without charge.<sup>50</sup> In that period, our church’s pew system probably was very confusing. Likely some pews were still owned by families, others were rented, and others were free.<sup>51</sup> Back then, our ushers really had their work cut out for them.<sup>52</sup>

On August 26, 1920, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution was finally ratified. That amendment allowed women to vote. It is interesting to note that at its next meeting, on January 21, 1921, the First Congregational Society of Falmouth finally brought women into its membership. At that meeting, thirty-four women were made full voting members of the society.<sup>53</sup> A number of them were also elected to the offices and committees of the society. It appears that a number of those new members were spouses of men already in the society. At that same meeting, it was also voted to have a rummage sale, and a committee of five women and four men were elected to handle it. This appears to have been an innovative expansion of the society’s usual means of fund raising for our church.

When did our First Congregational Society finally stop renting their pews, so those pews could be free? I don’t know for sure. But I think I’ve found a clue. Down through the years, our society elected some of its members to serve as assessors. Those assessors received an annual

stipend until 1889, when the society was no longer taxing the polls and estates of its members.<sup>54</sup> In the decades that followed, the society continued to elect assessors. However, in the year 1926, the society finally dropped that position from its by-laws.<sup>55</sup> I assume that position was dropped because in that year there were no longer even pew rental costs for an assessor to determine.

If you think 1926 is late, you might be interested to know that the Park Street Congregational Church in Boston finally dropped its pew rentals in the year 1949!<sup>56</sup>

As you well know, in 1929 and the years following, America suffered from the “Great Depression.” As our church records indicate, women in our church played a vital role in those difficult years. No longer having the old system of society member taxation and pew rentals to fall back on, our society gladly welcomed the funds that our church’s women were able to raise to supplement our congregation’s free pledges.

Our society thanked our church’s Women’s Union for contributing \$500 to the society’s expenses in 1932. In 1933 and 1934, the Depression years that followed, our Women’s Union further assisted our society by paying our church’s light, heat, water, and tax bills.<sup>57</sup>

### **The Merger of Our Church and Society**

The last date I will mention is 1936. One night that year, our church voted to incorporate, with the name of the new corporation being the “First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts.” That same night, the First Congregational Society voted to join with our church in that new corporation.<sup>58</sup> Both groups adopted the by-laws of the new corporation, which formed the church we are today.<sup>59</sup> All the real and personal property owned by the society was then conveyed to that new corporation. With that merger, the spiritual and material concerns of our congregation were brought together. And our congregation finally had the authority to oversee and be responsible for all its concerns. Thus it was that free pledges, a free will offering during worship, and entirely free seating finally came to our church.

## **ENDNOTES**

1. I thank Dr. Harold F. Worthley, former Librarian/Executive Director of the Congregational Library, for his gracious support in helpful suggestions he made about an earlier draft of this chapter.

2. Dr. Harold F. Worthley indicated that our church was originally known as The Church of Christ in Falmouth. After a second Congregational church was gathered in Falmouth in 1821 [today referred to as the “East End Meetinghouse” in East Falmouth], our church began to call itself the “First Congregational Church in Falmouth,” as shown in the church’s record book. *FCC2*, September 10, 1823. The new 1821 church in East Falmouth was then referred to as the “Second Congregational Church in Falmouth.

3. An acceptable description of one's personal conversion experience was usually required by early Congregational churches in America. However, I use the term "usually" here, as our church did not require that during the early years of Rev. Henry Lincoln's ministry in Falmouth. At that time, our church was moving in a more liberal direction, toward what came to be known as Unitarianism. However, between 1810 and 1816, six Harvard-educated Congregational clergy in Barnstable County, including Rev. Lincoln, had conversion experiences that brought them back to Calvinistic views [for example, as expressed in the *Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism*] which had traditionally been held by Congregationalists. See Chapter 8 – "Rev. Henry Lincoln and the 1812 Quissett Revival" in this book.

4. The following observation about the so-called "parish system" in Massachusetts was made in 1880:

*"[In Massachusetts] our Congregational churches have generally, almost invariably, sought the aid of such a society, and the societies have been as a rule just what the churches chose to make them . . . In some cases all that was required in order to join the society was to subscribe to their constitution. But the constitution bound them to no church, to no form of doctrine, but only to contribute their proportion for the purpose of maintaining public religious worship, or the public worship of God, or some such general terms, without making it denominational, or necessarily even Christian."*

"Report Upon the Parish System", *Minutes of the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States, Fourth Session, Held in St. Louis, Missouri, 1880*, 62.

5. One expression of that concern is found in the 1880 meeting of the National Council of Congregational Churches. That meeting received both majority and minority reports made in response to a study of the parish [or society] system and its history in New England. The majority report recognized defects in the system but set out ways to minimize them so churches could be aided effectively by their society or parish in secular matters. The minority report found many defects in the parish system, which it termed "evils." That report recommended that the Christian church "retain in its own hands the entire responsibility and control of its own affairs," thus rejecting the need for the parish system. Among the "evils" of the parish system noted in that minority report was the following:

*"3. [The parish system] intrusts all those interests of the church which are involved immediately or remotely in the administration of its pecuniary affairs, to a distinct and independent body, to a body free from ecclesiastical control, to a body in the determination of whose membership the church has no voice, to a body whose membership cannot be protected against the intrusion of men destitute of vital sympathy with godliness, and to a body organized for the avowed purpose of giving a measure of authority over the church to men not qualified even for membership in the church.*

*4. It gives dangerous prominence to men of wealth, and tends to subordinate spiritual interests to secular interests."*

"Report Upon the Parish System," 1880, 61–76.

6. *Baker v. Fales*, 16 Mass. 488 (1820).



7. It's worth noting that even before the separation of church and state in Massachusetts was voted in November of 1833, Boston, unlike most Massachusetts towns, did not tax its citizens for the support of its churches. Like our Falmouth church, most Congregational churches in Massachusetts communities were set up as geographically defined entities, sometimes referred to as "territorial parishes." They were supported by tax dollars received within their respective area. In contrast, Boston did not have such territorial parishes. Instead, Boston churches raised the money they needed through the sale and rental of their pews and through other means. William Barrows, E. P. Marving, J. C. Bodwell, and J. T. Tucker, eds., *The Boston Review, Devoted to Theology and Literature*, Vol. V, 338–339.

Also, as stated by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in 1854,  
*Without multiplying authorities, we take it to be perfectly well established as matter of history, that the inhabitants of Boston never were compellable by law to pay taxes for the support of public worship; that all religious societies were formed by voluntary association of those generally entertaining similar religious views in faith and practice. And it is believed that in many instances, if not the majority, these associations were not incorporated as poll parishes.*

Horace Gray, Jr., "Attorney General vs. Proprietors of the Meeting-House in Federal Street in Boston," For the County of Suffolk, November Term, 1854, in Boston, *Cases Argued and Determined by the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1869), Vol. 3, 39.

8. 19th-century Congregational historian Rev. Joseph Clark attributed at least some of the inability to secure church funding voluntarily in this period to "vehement and continual tirades against a learned and money-seeking ministry," which were vented first among Antinomians and Anabaptists, then in the disruptive street preaching of Quakers. According to Clark, those views eventually took their toll on many who otherwise would have made voluntary contributions. Joseph S. Clark, *A Historical Sketch of the Congregational Churches in Massachusetts from 1620 to 1858, With an Appendix* (Boston: Congregational Board of Publication, 1858), 38–39, 54–55.

9. Rev. H. M. Dexter of Boston noted the following in 1864:

*Church and Parish. This is the Massachusetts method, and grew out of the peculiar history of its religious affairs. Originally, none but church members were citizens, so that the town meetings were just church-meetings in another form, and the 'General Court' but a delegated mass meeting of the churches. Then the churches not only chose their own ministers, but contracted with and supported them, and built and owned their meeting-houses and parsonages; assessing and collecting money for the same, not merely of church-members, but of others. A few years later, the towns were expressly authorized to assess and collect church dues like other taxes.*

*When, after 1665, other than church-members were admitted to citizenship, the towns still continued to act as Parishes for the support of the minister, while the Church had the sole voice in his selection; until the "Parish controversy," which, after being carried through 1692–5, resulted in arranging a concurrent action between the town as a parish, and the Church, in such elections. Subsequently—in 1833—after long effort on the*

*part of those who felt aggrieved by the law as it stood, an act was passed severing all connection between Church and State, and introducing the voluntary system. The result of this was to organize the present parish system . . .*

Rev. H. M. Dexter, "Church and Parish," *Congregational Quarterly*, Vol. VI, No. IV, October 1864, 328–330.

10. FCS3, April 12, 1858 meeting, 34.

11. FCS3, August 11, 1856 meeting, 18.

12. FCS3, September 9, 1857 meeting, 27.

13. Edward Buck, *Massachusetts Ecclesiastical Law* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1866), 145.

14. Buck, 147–148.

15. William Root Bliss, *Side Glimpses from the Colonial Meeting-House* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1894), 87–89.

16. Bliss, 94.

17. FCS3, April 6, 1868 meeting, 75.

18. As Rev. Henry M. Storrs of Cincinnati, Ohio claimed in 1860,

*We see another class in our country, everyday increasing,—the class of non-attendants at Church. It is to be subdivided. One part of it stands aloof, disgusted with what they deem the mercenary motives of our entreaties. We say, 'Come and hear.' They interpret this to be, 'Come and take a pew, paying its rent.' . . . the thing is too transparent. He is wanted for his money. Not his soul for salvation; but his money for 'expenses.'*

*The other part of this great class, especially in our cities, is made up of the poor whom pew-rents debar from the churches. Their pride revolts from the 'stranger's pew,' and from the 'poor man's pew.' They will not brook 'to be seated,' Sabbath after Sabbath, by the usher. It is a mark of poverty . . . under our system of taxation, they are shut out.*

Rev. Henry M. Storrs, "Church and Society," *Congregational Quarterly*, Vol. II, No. III, July 1860, 334–335.

19. A chart of our Falmouth church's new slip pews from about 1861 shows only six pews that had not been purchased, out of a total of ninety-four pews. All of those six were in the gallery, and three of them were in the less than desirable position of being against the front wall of the church, where one could mostly only see the pulpit from the side. An 1875 accounting of those same pews shows a total of five pews not sold—all but one of them in the gallery.

20. As noted in an 1866 article:

*There is a subject of infinite importance now stirring a great deal of Christian thought,*

*called in somewhat cumbrous phrase "Home Evangelization." How shall we save large masses of our population from infidelity or heathenism? . . . Very elaborate plans of labor are proposed to our churches, but we have no expectation of great results from any influences which do not emanate from the sanctuary, and bring men under the power of a preached Gospel . . . [561]*

*[Yet] we are thoroughly convinced that the practice of selling all the pews in our churches to the highest bidder, without any provision for the poor, is shutting multitudes out of the sanctuary, if not out of the kingdom of heaven. [566]*

*We are glad to see the experiment in some of our cities of public worship in some large hall, with seats free, by pastors of churches and their congregations. We should be glad to see the experiment of free churches thoroughly tried. Let the seats be free to all, and a voluntary collection be taken in some form. [564]*

*We think there are great advantages in bringing all classes, not actually degraded and filthy, into the same congregation . . . The prayers of the poor sanctify any place where they ascend. [565,566]*

"Article VI: Parish Finances," *Boston Review*, October 1866, Vol. VI, No.34, 561, 564–566.

21. "Article VI: Parish Finances," 564–565.

22. *FCS3*, April 10, 1866 meeting, 69.

23. *FCS3*, April 5, 1875 meeting, 106.

24. It was reported in 1886 that of about 422 Congregational churches in Massachusetts affiliated with the General Association, only 45 included an offering in their worship. *1886 Annual Report of the General Association of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts*, 22.

25. "The Twenty-fifth Annual Report of the State Committee on the Work of the Churches," *1890 Annual Report of the General Association of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts*, 16.

26. As Dr. Harold F. Worthley noted in a March 5, 2003 letter to me:

*From the first days, there was a collection (by placing cash or chits in an affixed box) for the poor and occasionally to supply the communion elements and furniture. Note the Cambridge Platform of 1648 which says it is the function of deacons to supply "the tables of the Lord, the ministry, and the poor."*

27. The church oversaw mission giving, deciding which organizations should be supported through its collections each year. Unlike other years I checked, however, in the year 1876 the society also got involved in this effort, as noted in the church's minutes. Of the organizations chosen by the church this year, three of them were supported by canvasses, which the society took of its own members. Those three were: Foreign Missions, the American Missionary Association, and Home Missions. The remaining mission offerings that year were received, as usual, by collection in church. *FCC3*, January 28, 1876 meeting.

28. The mission collections sponsored by the church in 1875 were as follows:

February: American College and Education Society

[A Congregational society that provided for education and the founding of colleges]

April: Foreign Missions

[Presumably the Congregationalists' American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions—ABCFM]

May: American Board for "Christian Lands."

[Presumably, specifically for the ABCFM's work in Christian regions]

June: Seamen's Friend Society

[A society closely associated with Congregationalists]

July: American Missionary Association

[Noted Congregational organization providing education, schools, and colleges for freed slaves in the South]

August: American Bible Society

[Interdenominational effort for the distribution of Bibles]

September: Home Missions

[Presumably the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society and the larger American Home Missionary Society with which it was affiliated. Both were Congregational societies. The former aided Congregational churches in MA; the latter aided such churches outside the Commonwealth, including the West. The MHMS is a forerunner of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ]

October: Sabbath School

[Presumably the Congregational Publishing Society which earlier had been called The Congregational Sabbath School and Publication Society.]

November: Widows and Orphans

Many of the above organizations eventually became incorporated into the "Homeland" and "World" mission boards of the United Church of Christ after the UCC was formed in 1957.

*FCC3*, February 4, 1875 meeting.

29. *FCC3*, December 31, 1875 meeting, N. p.

30. The First Congregational Church of Wellfleet was listed as having 206 members as of January 1, 1876. At that time, the next largest Congregational church listed in Barnstable County was the First Congregational Church of Yarmouth, with 155 members. *1876 Annual Report of the General Association of Congregational Churches of Massachusetts*, 104.

31. Total charities listed in 1876 were as follows: First Congregational, Falmouth, \$876; First Congregational, Wellfleet, \$216; First Congregational, Yarmouth, \$508.33. *1876 Annual Report of the General Association of Congregational Churches of Massachusetts*, 127.

32. *FCS3*, April 29, 1878 meeting, 116, and April 8, 1879 meeting, 118.

33. *FCS3*, April 25, 1881 meeting, 121.

34. *Church Incorporation Under the Laws of Massachusetts, 1891* (Springfield, Massachusetts: Springfield Printing and Binding Company, 1891), Appendix A, 11–12.

35. *The Congregational Year-Book, 1891* (Boston: Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society, 1891), 186–214.

36. *FCS3*, April 30, 1888 meeting, 140.

37. *FCS3*, June 25, 1888 meeting, 142.

38. *FCS3*, April 28, 1890 meeting, 155.

39. In 1886, it was said there were 2,520 inhabitants in Falmouth. *Celebration of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Town of Falmouth, Massachusetts, June 15, 1886* (Falmouth: Published By Order of the Town, 1887), 54. Church statistics reported for 1890 show that there were then five Congregational churches in Falmouth. They had a total of 328 adult members and 304 Sunday School members. *The Congregational Year-Book, 1891*, 194–195.

40. It appears that there may not have been regular ushers in our Falmouth church until 1890, when more pews in our sanctuary began to be available to newcomers and the need apparently was felt for ushers to be elected by the society. However, Congregational churches in America's cities apparently had ushers years before that. Rev. Henry M. Storrs, "Church and Society," *Congregational Quarterly*, Vol. II, No. III, July 1860, 335.

41. "The Twenty-fifth Annual Report of the State Committee on the Work of the Churches," *1890 Annual Report of the General Association of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts*, 16.

42. Massachusetts Congregationalists voted the following resolution in 1892:

*Resolved, That the State Association is constrained, in view of the growing importance of this subject of Systematic Benevolence, to urge, with greater emphasis than ever, upon the churches, of the necessity of adopting some system of offerings for the whole congregation, in connection with Sabbath worship, and as a part thereof.*

*1892 Annual Report of the General Association of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts*, 15–16.

43. "On Systematic Benevolence," *1893 Annual Report of the General Association of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts*, 47.

44. *FCS3*, May 22, 1893 meeting, 171.

45. *FCS3*, May 8, 1894 meeting, 174.

46. As noted in an 1873 Congregational newspaper,  
*A correspondent who has had experience on the subject, writes: The strongest objection to free seats in our churches seems to be fear of trouble as to seating families. That the money needed can be easily raised in a better way than by putting the house of the Lord up at auction is now generally conceded. Must not the other objection yield to the experience of those churches that have tried the "free" plan?"*  
*The Congregationalist*, May 15, 1873, 2.
47. *FCS3*, May 16, 1896 meeting, 180. At this meeting, the society voted to "continue the envelope system another year and instructed the Treasurer to purchase the necessary envelopes."
48. "Falmouth Locals," *The Enterprise*, Saturday, May 24, 1902, Vol. VIII, No. 8.
49. *FCS4*, January 11, 1904 meeting, 13.
50. *FCS4*, January 30, 1919 meeting, 147.
51. A pew chart of our church's main floor, likely from sometime in the period of 1905–1914, shows thirty-seven pews with names—presumably the names of those who owned those specific pews. The remaining thirty-one pews in that sketch are blank with no names attached to them.
52. It is noted that although the rental system didn't come to an end until 1949, "long before then most of the seats had been freed and made available to the general public."  
H. Crosby Englizian, *Brimstone Corner: Park Street Church, Boston* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), 196–197, 218.
53. *FCS4*, January 21, 1921 meeting, 164.
54. *FCS6*, 1888–89, The financial report for 1888–89 shows the society's assessors receiving \$6 for services, out of a total society budget of \$1,521.81. Assessors do not appear in the society's financial report for 1889–1990. *FCS6*, 1889–90.
55. *FCS3*, January 22, 1925 meeting, 189. Three assessors were chosen.  
*FCS3*, January 20, 1926 meeting, 193–199, and *FCS3*, January 19, 1927 meeting, 201–15. No assessors were chosen in 1926 or 1927. See also *FCS3*, January 8, 1906 meeting, 29. It shows a marginal note to the society's bylaws which says, "See Page 193 Annual Meeting 1926, "Assessors and Warrant discontinued. Power to call meetings given to clerk."
56. Englizian, *Brimstone Corner*, 218.
57. *FCS4*, January 18, 1933 meeting, 264–265; *FCS4*, January 24, 1934 meeting, 269.
58. *FCS4*, January 14, 1936 meeting, 282. This was the society's final meeting. It followed the meeting of our church. At the time of this incorporation and merger, the January 1936 *Pilgrim State News* publication of the Massachusetts Congregational Conference and Missionary Society

reported the following about our church:

*Falmouth: This church is just in the process of consummating its incorporation. It feels that it will be much benefitted by being rid of the church and parish type of organization.*

*59. By-Laws of The First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts, Approved Nov. 13, 1935 by The First Congregational Church and The First Congregational Society, Formally adopted January 14, 1936, 3.*



## Chapter 24 – Christmas Finally Comes to Our Church

### A Sermon

*A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots, The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD . . . The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. [Isaiah 11:1–3, 6–7 NRSV]*

For centuries, Congregationalists did not celebrate Christmas as a religious holy day, largely because they found no warrant for such an observance in the Holy Bible.



Henry Ward Beecher

This rejection of Christmas is portrayed by Henry Ward Beecher (1813–1887), the famous Congregational minister, in the following reflection on his early years.<sup>1(2)</sup> As Henry wrote in 1874:

*To me Christmas is a foreign day, and it will continue to be so till I die. When I was a boy, brought up on the old Litchfield hills [Connecticut], nobody talked to me about Christmas. I should have looked with wondering eyes to see what was meant if anybody had.*

*I remember when the idea of Christmas first dawned on me. There was a little Episcopal church in town, that was decorated on Christmas Day. I had been sent on an errand one night. I was*

*expressly forbidden to loiter, and of course, I loitered. Passing by this church, I perceived that something was going on there; and looking in I saw a number of people, with tallow candles, trying to put up some evergreens. I remember wondering why under the sun they were taking the woods into the church. On going home and asking what it meant, I was told that it was for Christmas, and I remember what thoughts crept through my little nature as to what Christmas was. I received no satisfactory explanation. I got the idea that it was kept up by the Episcopal Church, which I was taught to regard as a sort of Reformed Romish Church.*

*My mother was an Episcopalian, but she died before she had any great pleasure of knowing me. I was brought up according to the sternest, most literal Puritanic worship of New England, when the Bible was not read in church. Because the Episcopalians read the Bible so much in church the Puritans would not read it there at all. The ministers enjoined the people to read it at home, and so got more time for long sermons. Under circumstances in which everything was wanting that could invest religious service with elements of the imagination, my youth was passed without any knowledge or associations of Christmas . . .*

*It was not until I moved to Brooklyn [1847] that I came to have anything like settled relations to a Christmas Day, or a celebration of Christmas. So, where a Christmas nerve ought to be in my nature, there is none. Christmas Day to me is simply Christmas Day—that is all. I have no associations connected with it either of the family, of the church or of history, other than those which I can form concerning any other day, or any other subject. I do not count this a blessing . . .*

*Although in our church [Plymouth Congregational Church, Brooklyn, NY] we do not celebrate Christmas as it is celebrated in our immediate neighborhood, I regard it as a celebration which is heartily to be approved . . . Christmas is a day that ought to be memorable; and I should be glad if our children were brought up with associations such as would lead them to celebrate the anniversary day of the birth of our Lord.<sup>3</sup>*

### **Christmas And Our Beloved Children**

Let me tell you about our grandson, Carson! Carson is 2 1/2 years old. He lives with his parents in Las Vegas. Carson is coming to visit my wife Chris and me at Christmas time this year, and we just can't wait! Carson has such big, shiny, hazel-brown eyes. We can already imagine those big eyes filled with wonder as this little boy gazes up at all the colored bulbs and tiny white lights on our parsonage Christmas tree this year.

It's likely that in his amazement, Carson will repeatedly point his chubby little fingers at various shiny objects on that evergreen and ask, "That? That? That?" Our daughter tells us he's now at the stage where he just wants to know the name of everything. Carson is so loving and accepting. He doesn't hold a grudge, as many of us adults do. We can already imagine Carson in his little red sneakers and baggy red overalls, reaching his little arms up to be held and cuddled.

The other day, on the telephone, grandma Chris said, "I love you," to Carson. Across the wires from 2,700 miles away came Carson's gentle reply: "love you." We attribute this response—at least in part—to some coaxing from Carson's doting mother in the background.

Our grandson takes such delight in simple things. He's not pretentious, materialistic, or brand-name conscious. Being, at present, an only child and our only grandchild, Carson is likely to be showered with Christmas presents this year.

Chris and I can envision our living room floor covered with bright ribbons and colorful, torn-open Christmas wrapping papers. Carson will sit on the floor beside a pile of fancy toys with all kinds of sophisticated features. Features that fold out, flash lights, or sing songs. Yet, in the midst of all these expensive toys, it's likely that Carson's full attention will be caught by something extremely simple. Something simple like a turning wheel on a toy car, an extra big crayon, or a glittery ornament dangling low on our tree, which our cat swats at occasionally. It's surprising how even little things in life, which we adults take for granted, can give a child like Carson so much pleasure.

It's Christmas time. Our grandson is coming, and we can't wait! What about you? Are

there special children in your life at Christmas time, if not your own children, then grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces or nephews, or the children of friends?

### **Christmas And Early Christianity**

The early Christians were more interested in death dates than in birth dates. In the Christian Church's liturgical calendar, the death and resurrection of Jesus were commemorated long before there was any celebration of his birth. It's worth noting that our earliest New Testament Gospel, the Gospel of Mark, doesn't even mention Jesus' birth or early years. That Gospel begins with Jesus' baptism as an adult.

The early Christian focus on the end of human life, not its beginning, came about for at least two reasons. First, Easter was and still is considered to be the primary Christian festival. Second, Christians wanted to honor those early followers of Jesus who were martyred for their faith.

Death and resurrection were key themes for early Christians. But then, over time, many Christians began to see more importance in the birth of Jesus, in the celebration of Christmas, in the birth days of Christians, and in the role of children in their lives.

Fortunately, two of our New Testament Gospels tell us stories about Jesus' birth. As likely you know, the Gospel According to Luke tells about the poor shepherds of Bethlehem, who went "with haste" to the new born Jesus. In contrast, the Gospel According to Matthew tells about the wealthy wise men who visited the Christ Child too.

### **A Special Link Between Christmas And Children**

It seems that down through the centuries there has been a very special link between Christmas and children. For very often the celebration of Christ's birth has heightened people's sensitivity to the well-being of children. For example, in the pagan days of the Roman Empire children were discounted. By pagan Roman law, fathers could even kill their children if it suited their purpose. Yet, once Christianity became a legal religion within the Empire that law was struck down. Also, the state treasuries of Rome were opened up to help poor families provide for their children.

Also, over time, Christians who celebrated Christmas often took the lead in educating children and in caring for them through the establishment of orphanages and hospitals. The logic of this was inescapable. For what decent Christian could celebrate the birth of little Jesus and, at the same time, be uncaring and cruel to the children around them?

Down through the centuries, the birth of Jesus has increased the value placed on children and brought them better treatment. But the strong link between Christmas and children has also worked the other way too. In many cases, adults have also been led by little children. They've been led to Christmas, to the Christ Child, and ultimately, to a deeper appreciation of their own Christian faith.

As you know, every time we celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism in our church, these special words from Jesus about children are read. As Jesus said:

*Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these the kingdom of God belongs. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.<sup>4</sup>*

As Jesus indicated during the course of his ministry, there are some very special things about our faith that children can teach us adults.

One of the greatest Christmas stories outside the Bible is the work known as “A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens. You know that story; I won’t retell it here. But consider this. That story ultimately revolves around Tiny Tim, a sickly little child who has a handicap. As Dickens tells us, Ebenezer Scrooge is:

*a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner!<sup>5</sup>*

Yet, with the help of three Christmas ghosts, the prospect of this little child’s death touches something very deep and tender in Scrooge’s soul.<sup>(6)</sup> It touches something precious within old Scrooge, something precious that he had long since forgotten.

As a young person, Scrooge was caring and loving. Yet, over the course of his adult years, Scrooge had allowed himself to become hardened by life. As the years passed, Scrooge had become jaded and cynical. He had allowed his heart to grow narrow and cold. But in this Christmas story, Scrooge is wonderfully led by Tiny Tim to experience a rebirth. Scrooge is reborn in his heart with the godly and childlike feelings of joy, kindness, and compassion for others.

After this rebirth, Scrooge readily embraces the Christmas spirit of love. He decides to aid Bob Cratchit’s struggling family so this tender young child won’t die. Quite appropriately, Dickens brings this story to a close with Tiny Tim’s words of joy: “God bless us everyone!”<sup>7</sup>

I am reminded here of the ancient words of the prophet Isaiah, who said: “And a little child shall lead them . . .” Found in our scripture reading this morning, these words come to us from Isaiah’s great prophecy that one day God would send a Messiah King to establish justice and peace on earth.

## Christmas And Congregationalists

As likely you know, our Congregational ancestors were long opposed to the observance



The Ghost of Christmas Present  
Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*  
Artist: John Leach

of Christmas as a Christian holy day. They opposed it because they could find no direct authorization for it in the Bible. Also, they disliked Christmas because the celebration of it in England and elsewhere often involved the use of pagan customs, such as the hanging of mistletoe, the burning of a yule log, and the exchanging of gifts at the Winter Solstice.

Our Congregational church in Falmouth was almost two centuries old before it began having its first Christmas worship services in our sanctuary. How did such services come about in churches like ours after Congregationalists had rejected Christmas for centuries? Apparently, to a large extent, it was our church's children and their Sunday schools that brought Christmas into our Congregational churches.<sup>8</sup>

Around the time of the Civil War and afterwards, Congregational church schools began holding Christmas parties for their children.<sup>9</sup> Before that time, that wasn't often done. In 1863, "The Well-Spring," a Congregational publication for church schools, gave its very first account of a Christmas celebration connected with a church school. Put forth as a model to be followed by other Congregational church schools, that particular celebration was described as,

*a Christmas party given by a Sunday-school teacher in Maine for her class of eleven. The children went on Christmas Eve to their teacher's home where they found a tree and gifts awaiting them. Prayer was offered, the children sang and recited and the gifts were distributed. The record [of that party] ends with the hope that all "Well-Spring" children may have as kind and as faithful a teacher.*

Then, as "The Well Spring" went on to wonder:

*How long would it be before other teachers followed this example or before the various teachers in one school, wanting to try it on a larger scale, discovered that the church rooms were the most convenient place in which to hold their party?*<sup>10</sup>

More than likely, as those parties grew in popularity, many of them did migrate to the vestry or basement of their church, then even up into their church's sanctuary.

In the 1870s, many but not all Congregational church schools celebrated Christmas. There still were mixed feelings about it. Some church schools avoided the whole issue because they didn't hold sessions in the winter.<sup>11</sup> Yet, by the 1880s church school Christmas celebrations were widely accepted by Congregationalists and other Protestant denominations in the northern and western parts of our country.<sup>12</sup> Then, as Congregational churches interacted with their church schools and were influenced by them, those celebrations eventually led those churches to observe Christmas in their adult worship services as well. As church school researcher Katharine Lambert Richards concluded,

*The holiday aspect of Christmas thus led naturally to a recognition of its religious significance.*<sup>13</sup>

In large measure then, it was our children who finally led us Congregationalists, in Falmouth and

elsewhere, to bow down in wonder and adoration at the manger of God's Bethlehem son.

### Christmas Comes To Our Falmouth Congregational Church

Now, as one example of that progression, let's look at the earliest reports of Christmas observances in our First Congregational Church of Falmouth, which I have been able to find so far.

At the Congregational church last Sunday morning, a Christmas anthem was sung by the choir, and preaching by the pastor, H. K. Craig. In the evening a Christmas Concert was given by the Sabbath School, a large audience being present. The exercises were conducted by the superintendent. After prayer, select pieces were spoken by the juvenile members of the school, and also select reading and speaking by the older scholars and teachers. "Rejoice, O ye shepherds," a solo, duet and chorus, was sung by several members of the school. "Carols, Sweet Carols," was sung by a quartette. W. C. Davis led the singing, which was very fine. Miss Herendeen played the organ.

*The Barnstable Patriot*  
January 2, 1883

The year was 1882.

On Christmas Eve, which happened to fall on a Sunday that year, our church's Sabbath school sponsored a special Christmas Concert.<sup>(14)</sup> That likely was a special version of the usual Sabbath school "concert" of that period, which focused on children reciting scripture passages together. It may also have included hymns and prayers. That event was held in our church, likely downstairs in our vestry. Earlier that day, at the Sunday morning service in our sanctuary, our church's choir had sung a Christmas anthem. Perhaps that was done in anticipation of the children's Christmas Eve event? That Christmas anthem in 1882 may have been our choir's very first Christmas anthem sung in Sunday morning worship.<sup>15</sup>

By 1882, our congregation's church school [sometimes referred to as the Sabbath school] had already been in existence for fifty-eight years. It was begun in 1824. That school was now well established and an important part of our church's life. By the year 1882, many Congregational churches in Massachusetts had church schools that were as old as ours, or even older.<sup>16</sup>

On Christmas Eve in 1883, our church school held a Christmas festival at our church. Once again, that event was likely held downstairs. That festival was led by the church school superintendent. The room was decorated with greens. The minister offered prayer. The young people sang and recited. Remarks were made by a layperson. Then, Santa Claus even made an appearance to distribute gifts to the children.<sup>17</sup>

On Christmas Eve in 1886, the singing "scholars" of our church's Sabbath school put on a special cantata. The cantata they sang was entitled "Santa Claus' Mistake."<sup>18</sup> Frankly, I was very surprised to discover that Santa Claus was included in those early church school celebrations of Christmas. Likely my surprise came, at least in part, because in the present day I tend to view Santa Claus primarily as a secular figure, a figure that is strongly associated with the commercialization of Christmas. As Katharine Richards said of this period,

*A new note of warning appeared in 1899 [in a Baptist publication], directed not against popular theological errors with regard to Christmas, but against the perversion of its spirit by the commercialization of the season and its activities. Doubts were occasionally*



*expressed as to the place of Santa Claus in Sunday-school life; not all entertainments were as careful as the Christmas cantata, 'Santa Claus Entertained,' in which, when Santa is hailed as king by the various groups of characters, he modestly disclaims the title, and sings of Christ as the real King of Christmas . . . Such hesitation and protests were few and scattered, however . . .*<sup>19</sup>

In 1891, our church school again held a special Christmas Eve event. That time, the event was held upstairs in our church. Apparently, the church school children marched into our sanctuary as a group to sit in the front pews. The superintendent officiated. Children sang. And there was a “handsome” Christmas tree, set up right in front of our church’s central pulpit. That tree was laden with gifts for the children. Those gifts were soon distributed, once Santa Claus made his appearance.<sup>20</sup>

By 1896 or earlier, sermons on the meaning of Christmas as a sacred time for Christians began to be preached in our church’s Sunday morning worship services.<sup>21</sup>

It appears that for a number of years after 1891 our church school held a “concert” or festival on Christmas Eve, often in the vestry, which included a Christmas tree and gifts for our church’s children. It’s interesting to note that in the Christmas of 1904, those gifts were paid for by the offering collected in the church’s morning worship service the Sunday before.<sup>22</sup>



Our modern sanctuary  
Christmas tree



Our modern sanctuary  
at Christmas with poinsettias

So it was that Christmas finally came to our Falmouth church. It came to us through our children. And very likely it came into many of America’s Congregational churches in a similar way.

### **“And A Little Child Shall Lead Them”**

Our children and the children of the world are so precious. They are such a part of the spirit of Christmas and its observance. Children remind us of God’s gift of the Christ Child to us in Bethlehem. Also, as Jesus taught us, children are examples to us adults of some special qualities that are so important to our Christian faith.



As with my grandson Carson, children can remind us of the incredible wonder of our lives and of God. Children can remind us to put aside our grudges and our adult inclinations to be cynical and jaded. Children can remind us to do those things in order to be more loving and more accepting of others, just as Jesus was loving and accepting.

Children can remind us to take delight in simple things. The drive for money and material possessions is so strong in our world today. Yet Jesus taught us to consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air. As Jesus said, God provides for their needs; even more will God provide for our human needs.

In this season of Christ's birth, think of the precious children in your life. Then ask yourself this question: "What special lessons do those children have to teach me?"

*And a little child shall lead them.*



Our sanctuary clock at Christmas



Christmas Eve

The custom of having a Community Christmas Tree on the Falmouth Village Green on Christmas Eve apparently was begun in 1919. H. V. Lawrence suggested it. It was proposed as “a strictly non-sectarian festival and that all the churches including the Roman church be invited to participate in the festivities, which would include singing of carols by all the church choirs and as many of the children of the town as would be present.”

*The Enterprise*, Falmouth, MA, December 6 and 13, 1919  
Vol. XXV, No. 36 and No. 37

## ENDNOTES

1. Henry's sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, was the author of “Uncle Tom's Cabin.” Their father was the noted Rev. Lyman Beecher, who served both Congregational and Presbyterian churches.
2. This scanned image is from Chandler B. Beach and Frank Morton McMurry, eds., *The New Student's Reference Work*, 5 volumes, Chicago, 1914. The image is in the public domain.  
[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:NSRW\\_Henry\\_Ward\\_Beecher.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:NSRW_Henry_Ward_Beecher.jpg)
3. Henry Ward Beecher, “Religious Anniversaries, Lecture Room Talk,” *The Christian Union*, December 23 and December 30, 1874.
4. Mark 10:14–15.
5. Charles Dickens, *The Annotated Christmas Carol—Annotation by Michael Patrick Hearn* (New York: Avenel Books, 1976), 58.
6. The image of Scrooge's second visitor is by John Leech, as found in Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol. In Prose. Being a Ghost Story of Christmas* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1843). First edition. The image is in the public domain.  
[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Scrooges\\_third\\_visitor-John\\_Leech,1843.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Scrooges_third_visitor-John_Leech,1843.jpg)
7. Dickens, *The Annotated Christmas Carol*, 172.
8. Katharine Lambert Richards, *How Christmas Came to the Sunday-Schools: The observance of Christmas in the Protestant church schools of the United States, an historical study*. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1934). This is an excellent resource, which I am much indebted to for its many insights and historical facts related to this theme.
9. Richards. The author notes that in 1856 the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts put Christmas on a par with the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Thanksgiving, and February 22 as a state holiday when all business should be suspended. [94–95] Then, by 1860:

*The movement of the various [mainline American Protestant] denominations toward a general acceptance of Christmas was definitely under way . . . [84]*

10. Richards, 188. She was referring to *The Well-Spring*: vol. 29, no. 5, January 30, 1863–Christmas Eve in Maine.
11. Richards, 131.
12. Richards, 145.
13. Richards, 147.
14. The image of the newspaper clipping is from the Falmouth section of *The Barnstable Patriot*, Vol. LIII, No. 24, January 2, 1883.
15. *Yarmouth Register*, Yarmouth Port, Saturday, December 23, 1882, Vol. 46, No. 51; *Barnstable Patriot*, January 2, 1883, Vol. LIII, No. 24.
16. *Early Chronology of Massachusetts Congregational Sabbath Schools and the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society*, Chapter IV, 21.
17. *Yarmouth Register*, Yarmouth Port, Saturday, December 29, 1883, Vol. 47, No. 52.
18. *Barnstable Patriot*, December 28, 1886, Vol. LVI, No. 25.
19. Richards, 155. Richards refers to *Our Young People*: vol. 19, no. 51, December 23, 1899–The real lesson of Christmas, Edward Bok.
20. *Barnstable Patriot*, January 5, 1892, Vol. LXII, No. 27.
21. *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, December 26, 1896, Vol. II, No. 39.
22. *The Enterprise*, Falmouth, Massachusetts, Saturday, December 24, 1904, Vol. X, No. 38.

## Chapter 25 – A Service of Thanksgiving in Remembrance of Our Pilgrim Forebears

*I to the hills lift up mine eyes from whence shall come mine aid; Mine help doth from  
Jehovah come, which Heav'n and earth hath made.*

Psalm 121, The Bay Psalm Book, 1640

*First book printed in the British colonies of North America*

Our Falmouth church was gathered in 1708. Its Pilgrim and Plymouth Colony roots go deep. Prior to 1708, our worshiping congregation was a “branch church” of the Barnstable church in Plymouth Colony. That old church was originally gathered in London, England, in 1616 by Rev. Henry Jacob. That London congregation is said to have been the first to describe itself as “Congregational.”

Before 1616, Rev. Jacob spent a decade in exile in Holland. There, Rev. Jacob knew and influenced Rev. John Robinson, who became known as the “Pastor of the Pilgrims.” In 1620, about one-sixth of Rev. Robinson’s congregation in exile in Holland came to these shores on the “Mayflower.” Fleeing religious persecution, members of Rev. Jacob’s London church came to find sanctuary among the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony in 1634. Led by Rev. John Lothrop, that London church group initially settled in Scituate but then moved permanently to Barnstable in 1639.

Our service this morning contains some elements from the relatively simple Sabbath worship services of our spiritual forbears, the Puritans in New England in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Following modern scholarly practice, I’m using the term “Puritan” here to refer to both Separatist Puritans [the Pilgrims] in Plymouth Colony and Non-Separatist Puritans in other early New England colonies. Those two groups shared the same basic Puritan theological beliefs, but they had this difference. Separatist Puritans believed they had to leave the Church of England in order to live their lives in accordance with biblical principles. In contrast, Non-Separatist Puritans believed the Church of England could be reformed from within.

Those two Puritan groups in early New England are thought to have had very similar worship services. However, there could have been some variations in their worship because of their Puritan belief that Christ was at the head of each of their churches, thus each of their churches was independent and autonomous. That belief is still a very important one, held by our modern United Church of Christ churches.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Plymouth Colony law mandated that each town in the colony would build its own meeting house, specifically for town worship. Colony law also mandated that each town would seek to employ a suitable minister [Puritan] to preach God’s Word to its people. Even before Falmouth was officially incorporated as a colony town in 1686, it employed a lay preacher named Jonathan Dunham.

Our 17<sup>th</sup>-century forbears in Plymouth Colony typically had two worship services on the Sabbath, one at 9 a.m. and one at 2 p.m. In between services, people often stopped at a nearby home in their village for lunch. Each of those Sabbath services lasted upwards of three hours or even longer. A collection was often taken at the second service.

There were no pews but only rough seats or benches in New England's earliest meeting houses. Men and women were seated separately on opposite sides of the meeting house. It's been said that when those early Puritan women set their hair, they paid particular attention to their "meeting house side"—the side that faced the men's section.

Those early meeting houses had no heat. In the winter, worshippers often brought foot stoves with them to worship services. Sometimes parishioners carried hot stones in blankets, and women carried them in their hand muffs. Ministers wore mittens and preached in overcoats. When infants were baptized in winter—preferably the Sunday after their births—it was sometimes necessary to break the ice in the baptismal bowl first. It wasn't until 1827 that our Falmouth church likely had its first wood stoves.

The first generation of Plymouth Colony churches had these five offices of ministry:

PASTOR: who proclaimed the WORD by exhortation.

TEACHER: who proclaimed the WORD by instruction and by administering Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

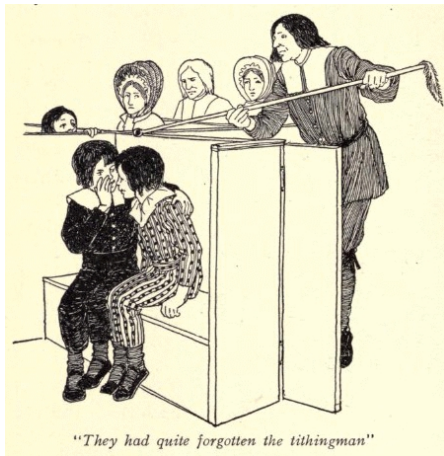
RULING ELDER(S): who helped with church administration, particularly bringing in new members and administering discipline; visited from house to house; and presided at congregation meetings to elect and ordain church officers.

DEACONS: who collected voluntary offerings at worship to distribute to the poor, to support the church's ministry, and to furnish the Lord's Table with bread and wine.

WIDOW: usually an older woman in the church who visited the sick and prayed for the church.

In those early years, it was expected that each church would have two ministers, the pastor and the teacher, but employing two such persons soon became impractical. Remembering that Puritan tradition, today's United Church of Christ ministers are ordained and installed in their churches as "Pastor and Teacher." The Puritans eventually abandoned the office of ruling elder, and deacons, who were ordained for life, took on many of the ruling elder's functions. The ruling elder and deacons often sat at the front of the meeting house on either side of the central pulpit, facing the congregation.

Early Puritan worship services in New England may also have had one or more TITHING-MEN who had some involvement in those services. As Dr. Herbert B. Adams, a professor of history and social science at John Hopkins University, told the American Antiquarian Society in 1881:



A Tithingman

Illustrator: Lucy Fitch Perkins, 1912

*The oldest people in New England remember the Tithing-man as a kind of Sunday Constable, whose special duty it was, in the old parish meeting-house, to quiet the restlessness of youth and to disturb the slumbers of age. Many are the tales which grandfathers can tell concerning this ancient watchman of the congregation, who saw to it that all persons were attentive except himself, and who occasionally broke the peace by sharply rapping with his tune-book and pointing at some whispering boy, or else by patrolling the aisles to arouse sleeping saints by means of his black pole, tipped at one end with brass. In some churches there were two or three of these grim, vigilant Tithing-men. It is said that one or two of them sometimes sat under the very shadow of the pulpit, facing the congregation. But more usually one Tithing-man sat at each door of the meeting-house to keep out dogs, and one often*

*sat in the gallery to keep in boys.<sup>1(2)</sup>*

*[Note: For a different view of Tithing-men and also more information from Herbert Adam's 1881 presentation, see endnote.<sup>3</sup>]*

## THE PRELUDE

The earliest Pilgrims in New England did not use organs or other musical instruments in their worship, as they saw no New Testament authorization for their use. However, they did welcome having instrumental music in their homes.

## DRUMMING TO WORSHIP

The call to attend Sabbath worship was sometimes given on a conch shell or by a drummer. Plymouth Colony has been called a Bible commonwealth because of the desire of its inhabitants to order the colony's life in accordance with biblical teachings. Likewise, early colony worship services strongly emphasized preaching—the proclamation of the Word of God as interpreted from the Holy Bible. The colony's meeting houses usually had an open Bible in them during worship. That was an important symbol of their Puritan belief that the Bible should be accessible to and read by all faithful Christians. That openness was in sharp contrast to the practices sometimes found in the Old World of chaining Bibles up or keeping them away from laypeople out of fear they would misinterpret them. Printed books in that period were very precious. Thus, presumably, Bibles were not kept in the early meeting houses but rather brought into them at the time of worship.

*[At the sound of the drums this morning, which call our congregation to worship, we invite our congregation to stand. During this time, the Holy Bible will be brought forward, placed on our church's lectern, and opened to the text for the day.]*

## MOMENT OF GREETING AND CONCERNS



## RECEIVING OF PRAYER BILLS

In early Plymouth Colony worship, it was customary for parishioners to present “bills” to the minister before he stepped into the pulpit. Those bills were small slips of paper that contained the names of people and/or events the bill writer wished to have remembered in a prayer during the worship service.

*[Every worship bulletin this morning contains a slip of paper. Please have your bills ready to be collected by our ushers, so they can present them to our minister.]*

## THE CALL TO WORSHIP

Head Deacon

Other than singing hymns and saying “Amen” to the prayers offered by the minister, the early worship services of Plymouth Colony did not provide much opportunity for congregations to participate in them orally. Services were primarily led by the clergy. The ruling elder and deacons sometimes assisted. However, when the afternoon Sabbath service was over, there often was an open session in which congregation members could ask for their minister’s advice, discuss his sermon, and/or “prophecy” by expressing their own faith views to the congregation.

## A HYMN OF ADORATION

“Come, Ye Thankful People, Come”

In the fall of 1621, following their brutal first winter in the New World when they lost half their members to illness, the Pilgrims set aside three days to celebrate the success of their autumn harvest. Wampanoags were guests at that celebration, which included feasting and game playing. That celebration has long been honored as the “First Thanksgiving in America.” In fact, it was similar to the Harvest Home festivals the Pilgrims had known back in England. Although those English festivals were largely secular in nature, there is good reason to believe that the Pilgrims were deeply thankful for the goodness of God, which brought them that harvest after they had endured so many hardships. As Pilgrim Edward Winslow wrote of that harvest, “and God be praised, we had a good increase of Indian corn, and our barley indifferent good . . .” Ironically, the Indian corn that the Pilgrims had taken when they first landed on Cape Cod, then later paid for, was the corn that sustained them.<sup>(4)</sup>



“The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth”

Artist: Jennie A. Brownscomb, 1914



## A PRAYER

The Puritans rejected prayer books and set forms of worship as they considered them human inventions that were idolatrous and thus forbidden by the second of Moses' "Ten Commandments." They preferred extemporaneous prayers that relied on the aid of the Holy Spirit. They viewed the Lord's Prayer as a model for constructing their own prayers but did not include it as a set prayer in their church worship. The first prayer in their worship service often lasted a quarter of an hour. Their custom was to stand during the prayers in their worship services.

*[This morning, we invite those who are able to stand, to please do so doing this prayer.]*

## AN ANTHEM

"Let All Things Now Living"

*[Note: sung from Balcony]*

## THE THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATION

Head Deacon

Thanksgiving Proclamation by the United States President

In addition to Sabbath worship services, early New England Puritans also set apart special days for religious observances. The Puritans were strong believers in God's providential acts. When terrible events took place that seemed to be God's judgment against them for sins they had committed, they set aside days of fasting in order to seek God's forgiveness. When beneficial events took place that seemed to reflect God's goodness and mercy toward them, they set apart days of thanksgiving to express their gratitude to God. It's known, for example, that in the 1630s and 1640s, individual Plymouth Colony towns or churches set aside days of Thanksgiving and sometimes for the annual harvest.

In a similar spirit of thankfulness for God's blessings and the fall harvest, the Continental Congress proclaimed our country's first national days of Thanksgiving from 1777 to 1784. And in 1789, it was George Washington who issued the first Presidential Thanksgiving Proclamation, a practice that is now followed by every United States President.

## THE SINGING OF A HYMN

"Psalm XXIII"

The Bay Psalm Book

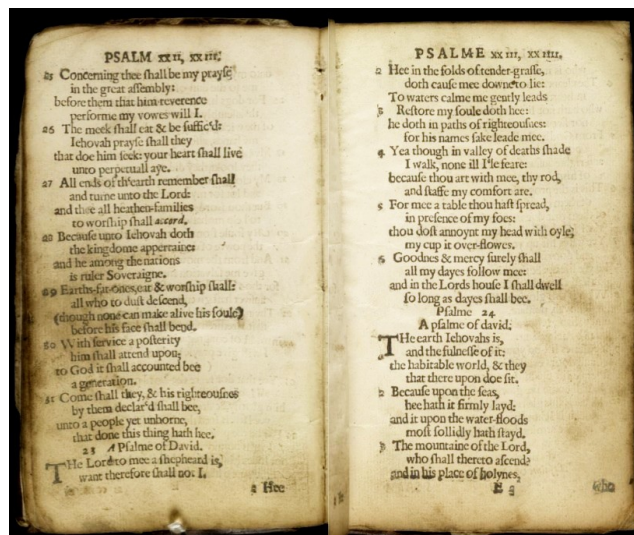
*The Lord to mee a shepherd is / want therefore shall not I  
He in the folds of tender grasse, / Doth cause me downe to lie  
To waters calme hee gently leads, / restore my soule doth hee:  
Hee doth in paths of righteousness: / for his name's sake leade me.  
Yea though in valley of deaths shade / I walk, none ill I'll feare:  
Because thou art with mee, thy rod, / and staffe my comfort are.  
For mee a table thou hast spread, / in presence of my foes:  
Thou dost anoynt my head with oyle, / my cup it overflowes,  
Goodness and mercy surely shall, / all my dayes follow mee:  
And in the Lord's house I shall dwell, / so long as dayes shall bee.*

In the earliest years, Plymouth Colony congregations sang hymns that were based on the

Psalms in the Old Testament, as they felt that only biblical verses were worthy enough to be sung in worship. After it was published in 1640, the Bay Psalm Book was frequently used in their worship.<sup>(5)</sup>

In 1681, the “lining out” of psalms was begun in Plymouth and was commonly practiced in New England’s Puritan churches by the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. A precentor or clerk would “line out” a psalm by reading each of its lines out loud before the congregation sang it. This was done to help any members of the congregation who were illiterate. But it also produced some terrible singing and was later abandoned, though not without much controversy in the churches.

*[Our precentor this morning will begin this hymn by lining it out. Then the congregation is asked to complete it by singing it without an accompaniment.]*



The Bay Psalm Book – Psalm XXIII – 1640

## THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Hebrews 11:1–3, 8–6

Head Deacon

## EXPOSITION OF THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Our scripture reading this morning is from the Geneva Bible of 1560 A.D., which was the translation the Pilgrims often used. The Geneva Bible was influenced by reformer John Calvin. This translation had extensive marginal notes that were strongly Protestant in orientation.

The Pilgrims sometimes referred to the public reading of scripture without comment as “dumb reading.”

*[This morning, the reading will be followed by a brief explanation of the text and its context.]*

## THE SERMON

Preaching was considered the climax of early Puritan worship services. It was the time when the minister exercised his primary role as the expositor of the oracles of God. Adults and children listened carefully to sermons as “the wisdom of God plainly delivered”—as one modern scholar put it. And they often memorized the key points of the sermons they heard in order to recount them in their homes that night. Some even brought ink and paper to church to record them. Puritan sermons sought to persuade the heart, but they were also significant experiences for the intellect.

Puritan worshipers believed that sermons provided nourishment for their souls. Therefore, they often felt malnourished if their minister’s sermon did not last at least an hour. An hourglass was often used to be sure that the congregation was not deprived.

*[This morning, our tithing-man will attend to the hourglass. He will also survey our congregation to see if any young boys are misbehaving or any parishioners have fallen asleep, particularly during the sermon.]*

## **A PRAYER**

Following their sermons, ministers often offered a long prayer, which could last as long as an hour.

*[This morning, following the Puritan custom, we invite those who are able to stand, to please do so during this prayer.]*

## **THE OFFERING**

Head Deacon

In the early years of Plymouth Colony, a free will contribution was collected during worship. Once this was announced by a deacon, the entire congregation came forward from their seats, to place their monetary contributions in a wooden box in the seat beside a deacon, or at a deacon's feet if their contribution was another type of item. Congregation members then filed back to their seats. In the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, laws began to be enacted in Plymouth Colony to support such collections when they were not adequate. In time, church support came through town taxation, and offerings were no longer collected during worship. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, largely due to changes in the law, Massachusetts Congregational churches began supporting themselves through free will offerings again, and offerings were again received in their worship services.

*[This morning we will collect our morning offering in the usual way, but we will use long-handled offering boxes and also long -handled offering bags, which may have been first used in our church in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.]*

## **AN ANTHEM**

“Tallis’ Canon”

*[Note: Sung from the balcony]*

## **THE DOXOLOGY No. 515**

Our church's traditional Doxology was originally published in 1695 in England. However, it is set to the Old Hundredth tune, which was known to the early Plymouth colonists. This tune appeared in the Genevan Psalter of 1551. When Puritan refugees left Geneva and returned to England after the death of Queen Mary, they brought that Psalter and this tune with them to use in their worship.

## **A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

### **THE SINGING OF A HYMN**

“Now Thank We All Our God”

## **THE BENEDICTION**

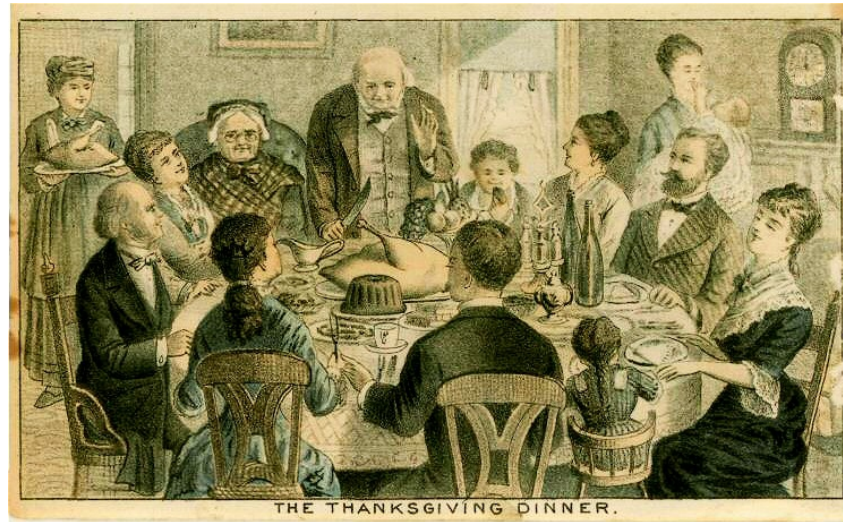
*[As you leave this service, we invite you to receive five kernels of corn to place beside your Thanksgiving dinner plate as an important symbol of our church's spiritual heritage and the significance of this national holiday. We also invite you to use the Thanksgiving prayer included here.]*

## POSTLUDE

Participants: ushers, precentor, head deacon, tithingman, organist, pastor and teacher.

We give special thanks to Deacon Evelyn Johnson who brought our church the idea of this Thanksgiving worship service, oversaw its implementation, and provided the Pilgrim costumes.

Research and Texts by Rev. Dr. Douglas K. Showalter<sup>(6)</sup>



“The Thanksgiving Dinner”

*Artist: unknown, Edward Ridley & Sons, 1870*

## FIVE KERNELS OF CORN

Like all free churches of “the Congregational Way,” we in the First Congregational Church of Falmouth, of the United Church of Christ, are spiritual descendants of those courageous Pilgrims who came to these shores in 1620 seeking freedom to practice their own faith and who, despite incredible hardships, celebrated what has been called the First Thanksgiving of European settlers on these shores.

In their first winter in New England, the Pilgrims lost one-half of their number to disease. Yet, the next spring, not a single Pilgrim returned to England. Through it all, those Pilgrims hung on, still trusting in God’s love and mercy. They were not disappointed! For in time, their settlement did prosper.

In 1820, in Plymouth, Massachusetts, at the bicentennial celebration of the Pilgrims’ landing in America, Daniel Webster spoke, after which a great banquet was held. Before eating that great meal, many were stirred to discover FIVE KERNELS OF CORN at each of their dinner plates. Those kernels were silent but precious reminders of those courageous people of faith and the faithful, loving God who had led them through and beyond their cruel wilderness sufferings in this New World. And so, down through the years, it has been a Thanksgiving tradition in some

New England homes to set out five kernels of corn at each diner's plate, in remembrance and in prayerful thanksgiving for God's continuing faithfulness to us, even in hard times.

This five kernel custom was originally connected to the belief that during a drought the Pilgrims experienced in 1623, their food supply was reduced to the point where they had only five kernels of corn to eat per person per day. That view is said to have been based on a passage William Bradford, the early Governor of Plymouth Colony, wrote in his journal, "History of Plimoth Plantation."<sup>7</sup>

However, it is now believed that very likely the Pilgrims did not experience hardship to that degree that year. The Pilgrims did experience an extended period at the end of spring in 1623 when they had no corn to eat, as the corn they had left from growing it the previous year needed to be planted to provide them a good harvest in 1623. However, at that time, they still had access to shellfish, fish, nuts, some water fowl, and occasionally a deer to eat. Lacking vegetation, that diet was not satisfactory for them, but they managed, and none of them are known to have died because of that lack of corn to eat.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, the longstanding five kernel custom initiated by Daniel Webster in 1820 is now seen as a symbol of the initial hardship and suffering the Pilgrims faithfully endured when they first came to this New World in 1620.

#### *A THANKSGIVING PRAYER*

*Eternal God, who cares for all your people, we thank you for your many blessings in our lives. We thank you for . . . [children and family members around the table are given the opportunity to mention things they are thankful for].*

*We also thank you, that even in difficult times, you are always with us, seeking the very best for us through your great love. Bless those who are gathered around our table today, and bless this food we are about to receive to our nourishment.*

*Guide us, so that we, like the Pilgrims of old, may be brave and trusting in you as we live out our faith day by day. And help us to follow the example of your son, Jesus Christ, so that we may always seek to treat others with caring and kindness, as we would have others treat us. With praise and a deep spirit of thanksgiving in our hearts, we lift up this prayer to you on this special day. Amen*

#### **ENDNOTES**

1. Herbert B. Adams, "Saxon Tithing-Men in America," *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press), Vol. I, Issue IV, February 1883, 1–2, 8–9.

Adams indicated that having tithing-men was a custom the early settlers of New England brought

with them from England and that it originated in earlier Saxon culture. Adams also noted the following:

*By an Act of the Massachusetts Colony as late as 1677 the selectmen of every town then existing in Massachusetts were ordered "to see to it that there bee one man appointed to inspect the ten families of his neighours." Such was the original character of the Tithing-man's office in New England as well as in Old England . . .*

Adams also said:

*From original town records it appears that it was the duty of the early New England Tithing-man, not merely to preserve order in the meeting-house, but to see to it that every one went to church. The Tithing-man was a kind of ecclesiastical "whipper-in." After looking over the congregation to find if any seats were vacant, the Tithing-men would steal out and explore the horse-sheds, the adjoining fields and orchards, the inns and ordinaries, and even the houses of the village, in order to search out skulkers from divine service . . .*

2. This image of a tithing-man is by Lucy Fitch Perkins in Margaret B. Pumphrey, *Stories of the Pilgrims* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Company, 1912), 246.

3. Early New England records indicate that tithing-men did exist then. However, noted early meeting house researcher Peter Benes asserted in 2012 that the idea they carried "a stick with a foxtail on one end and a thorn on the other end" to awaken sleeping Puritan parishioners with is an "inaccurate impression." According to Benes, that idea about tithing-men was based only on an "imaginary story" included in a "fictitious diary" that was first published in 1862.

Peter Benes, *Meetinghouses of Early New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 18–19, 377, 418.

The "imaginary story" Peter Benes was referring to appeared in this book.

James Robinson Newhall, *Lin: or, Jewels of the Third Plantation* (author's pseudonym: Obadiah Oldpath) (Lynn, Massachusetts: Thomas Herbert and James M. Munroe, 1862), 70–71.

In contrast, in 1881, Herbert Adams presented this description of the early New England Tithing-man's black pole to the American Antiquarian Society:

*This was the old English Tipstaffe, an emblem of the constabulary office, and representing the person of the King . . . By the Providence laws of Massachusetts . . . Tithing-men were required to "have a black staffe of two feet long, tipped at one end with brass about three inches, as a badge of their office." We find these black staves mentioned in local town records . . . It is said that in some early New England parishes, the Tithing-man's rod was tipped at one end, not with brass, but with a squirrel's tail. This end was used in awakening women. The other end was a deer's hoof, which carried sharp conviction to men and boys.*

Herbert B. Adams, "Saxon Tithing-Men in America," 1.

*[The above two historians have presented conflicting views of the behavior of tithing-men in early New England worship services. Did early tithing-men use rods in those church services to awaken sleeping parishioners? Even if it wasn't a widespread practice, I suspect that some tithing-men back then did use a rod in some way to accomplish that.]*

4. This image is of the 1914 painting "The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth" by Jennie A. Brownscombe (1850–1936). The original painting is at the Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal. <http://www.lakenhal.nl/persberichtendetail.php?id=144>. The image is in the public domain. <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thanksgiving-Brownscombe.jpg>
5. This image is of Psalm XIII in an original copy of the Bay Psalm Book, published in 1640. This image is in the public domain. [https://archive.org/details/The-Bay-Psalms-Book-wdl-3600/3600\\_dan/page/n51/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/The-Bay-Psalms-Book-wdl-3600/3600_dan/page/n51/mode/2up)
6. This image is of the 1870 drawing "The Thanksgiving Dinner," author unknown. Edwd. Ridley & Sons. Corner of Grand & Allen Streets, New York. This image is in the public domain. [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1870\\_Ridley\\_Thanksgiving\\_NY.png](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1870_Ridley_Thanksgiving_NY.png)
7. William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation*, Reprinted from the Massachusetts Historical Collection (Charles Deane, ed.), Privately Printed, 1856, 132. <https://archive.org/details/historyplymouth00bradgoog/page/n10/mode/2up>
8. A good resource on the above is the November 28, 2013 web page by Heather Wilkinson Rojo, entitled "The Five Kernels of Corn Myth at Thanksgiving," at: <https://nutfieldgenealogy.blogspot.com/2013/11/the-five-kernels-of-corn-myth-at.html>



## Chapter 26 – Select Time Line of American Congregationalism and Our Church



Martin Luther

Artist: Lucas Cranach the Elder, 1529



Ulrich Zwingli

Artist: Hans Asper, 1531

### ***1500s***

- 1517** Martin Luther posts his “95 Theses,” inaugurating the Protestant Reformation.<sup>(1)</sup>
- 1519** Ulrich Zwingli dispenses with the Lectionary in preaching, thus launching the Swiss Reformation.<sup>(2)</sup>
- 1529** Luther and Zwingli meet and disagree on Holy Communion at Marburg Castle in Germany.
- 1531** Zwingli is killed in battle.
- 1533** John Calvin has a religious experience.
- 1536** Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion* book is published.
- 1539** Calvin is invited to guide the Reformation in Geneva, then is banished.
- 1541** Calvin is re-invited to guide the Reformation in Geneva.
- 1553** Queen Mary assumes the English throne; “Marian exiles” flee to Geneva.
- 1559** “Act of Uniformity” makes use of the *Book of Common Prayer* compulsory in England.
- 1560** *Geneva Bible* is published in Geneva.
- 1563** “39 Articles of Faith” are initiated in England as reforms for the Anglican church. They are assented to in 1617 by Rev. John Robinson and William Brewster in “The Seven Articles of the Church of Leyden,” in their effort to secure England’s permission for the Pilgrims to immigrate to the New World.

- 1563** Henry Jacob is born.
- 1563** The word “Puritan” begins to appear in English writings.
- 1565** All preaching licenses are revoked in England, then re-issued only to those clergy approved by the government.
- 1566** “Advertisements of 1566” are adopted that require uniformity of clergy dress in England.
- 1567/1568** Emergence of Puritan “Privy Church” meetings in secret for worship in England.
- 1569** John Calvin dies.
  
- 1582** Robert Browne’s *A Treatise of Reformation without Taryng for Anie* book is published.
  
- 1593** Three Puritans, who came to be called the last of the “Congregational martyrs,” are hanged in England.

## ***1600s***

- 1603** “Heads of Differences Between Congregationalism and the Church of England” petition is sent to James I by an English congregation that had fled to Amsterdam.
- 1603** “Millenary Petition” from about 800 Puritan clergy is sent to James I in England.
- 1604** Henry Jacob’s *Principles and Foundations of Religion* book is published.
- 1606/1607** Scrooby congregation is gathered [some say gathered in **1602**].
- 1609** Pilgrims go in exile to Leyden, Holland.
  
- 1611** *Authorized Version* [KJV] of the Holy Bible is published in England.
- 1616** Southwark church gathered near London with Henry Jacob as minister.
  
- 1620** Mayflower lands in the New World; “Mayflower Compact” is signed.
- 1624** The first non-Separatist Puritan settlement is established in America; it is settled at Cape Ann.
- 1629** The Salem Church is gathered with its clergy ordained by laity; not by bishops, as in England.
  
- 1630** Winthrop fleet arrives.
- 1634** William Ames’ *The Marrow of Theology* book is published; in 1717, Increase Mather called it the “only book of theology suggested for the minister’s reading.”
- 1636** Harvard College is founded.
- 1636** Rev. Roger Williams, who champions the separation of church and state, is banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony.
- 1637** Anne Hutchinson, who claims private revelations, is banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony.
  
- 1640** *The Bay Psalm Book* is published; it is the first book published in the British colonies in North America.
- 1642** Massachusetts Bay Colony persecution of Baptists begins and lasts for more than thirty

- years.
- 1646** “Westminster Confession of Faith” is adopted by English Presbyterians and Congregationalists.
- 1646** Rev. John Eliot preaches his first sermon in Native American language.
- 1647** Massachusetts Bay Colony accepts a system of common schools; Puritans place strong emphasis on education.
- 1648** “Cambridge Platform” is adopted, in part to keep Presbyterianism out of New England.
- 1648** By one vote, Massachusetts Bay Colony finally sets death as the penalty for any who return to the colony after being banished; that law is eventually enacted against four banished Quakers who return to the colony.
- 1654** Due to lack of voluntary contributions, in part because of Quaker street preaching against such contributions, Massachusetts Bay Colony enacts a law that makes the support of Congregational clergy a legal responsibility; Boston churches don’t need that law as they have sufficient financial support, in part through their sale of pews.
- 1654 to 1658** Oliver Cromwell is the Lord Protector of England until his death.
- 1657** Plymouth Colony enacts a law to support Congregational clergy with tax dollars.
- 1658** “Savoy Declaration of 1658” set forth in England, amending the “Westminster Confession.”
- 1662** Massachusetts Bay Colony Synod adopts the “Half Way Covenant.”
- 1663** The first Baptist church is established in Massachusetts; it is settled in Seekonk, then in Swanzeey.
- 1664** Plymouth Colony passes a law to inflict corporal punishment on those who deny Holy Scripture.
- 1664** Responding to King Charles II’s demand, the General Court of Massachusetts Bay Colony extends the right to vote to males who are not church members, though that right comes with other requirements, such as a non-church member needs to be orthodox in religion and also obtain a certificate from all the ministers of their town that proves their religious and moral qualifications.<sup>(3)</sup>
- 1674-1676** King Philip’s War is fought; 1/10 of all white male colonists of military age are killed.
- 1679-1680** At Reforming Synod in Boston, clergy conclude that evils of their time are the result of God punishing New England for its shortcomings; they urge a day of covenant renewal for all churches.
- 1686** THE TOWN OF FALMOUTH IS INCORPORATED, THOUGH IT IS STILL CALLED SUCKNESSET AT FIRST.
- 1689** Governor Andros is imprisoned.  
“Toleration Act” is passed in England, giving legal protection to nonconformists in the colonies.

- 1691** New Charter is issued that joins the Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth colonies to form the Province of Massachusetts Bay.
- 1691** "Heads of Agreement" between Presbyterians and Congregationalists in England is adopted.
- 1692** Salem witchcraft trials take place.
- 1693** General Court of Massachusetts Bay mandates that Massachusetts churches need concurrence of their towns in the settlement of a minister

## ***1700s***

- 1700** FALMOUTH'S FIRST MEETING HOUSE IS BUILT THIS YEAR OR EARLIER NEAR THE OLD BURYING GROUND.
- 1701** Yale College is founded.
- 1705** Massachusetts Congregational clergy make "Proposals of 1705" to strengthen connections among MA churches, for example, to set up councils to answer questions about church disputes, etc., but their proposal is rejected by churches and lawmakers.
- 1708** "Saybrook Platform" is adopted in Connecticut; it is similar to the "Proposals of 1705" rejected in Massachusetts; the Platform establishes consociations of area Congregational churches, which sometimes act like church courts; Connecticut Congregationalism is more "Presbyterian" in nature than Massachusetts Congregationalism.
- 1708** THE FALMOUTH CHURCH IS GATHERED ON OCTOBER 28, HAVING PREVIOUSLY BEEN A 'BRANCH CHURCH' OF THE PURITAN CHURCH IN BARNSTABLE; THE NEW CHURCH LIKELY IS CALLED THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN FALMOUTH.
- 1709** General Association of Connecticut is organized; it is the first state organization of Congregational clergy.
  
- 1715-1717** FALMOUTH'S SECOND MEETING HOUSE IS BUILT NEAR THE LOCATION OF THE PREVIOUS ONE.
  
- 1740** The Great Awakening begins.
  
- 1752** FALMOUTH'S THIRD MEETING HOUSE IS BUILT ON THE VILLAGE GREEN.
  
- 1760** Estimated that in Massachusetts, Maine, Connecticut, and New Hampshire there are 530 Congregational churches and 550 ordained clergy [most Congregational]; it's also estimated that about 80% of the population in these colonies was Congregational before the Revolutionary War.
  
- 1775** Revolutionary War begins.
- 1777** FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY OF FALMOUTH IS BEGUN ABOUT THIS TIME.

- 1780** Massachusetts “Bill of Rights” is enacted on the “no representation without taxation” principle; Commonwealth towns are given the legal right to select and settle the religious teacher for their town—not the church’s people themselves—as town members are taxed for the support of these Congregational clergy; this causes considerable difficulty for Congregational clergy, especially as non-church members can have a significant say in debating and setting clergy salaries.
- 1783** Revolutionary War ends.
- 1784** “Saybrook Platform” is rejected as state law in Connecticut.
- 1787** King’s Chapel in Boston rejects the deity of Jesus.
- 1788** Massachusetts ratifies the U.S. Constitution on February 6, thus becomes the 6<sup>th</sup> of the original 13 states that join the Union.
- 1790** Methodism first appears in Massachusetts.
- 1792** Second Great Awakening begins.
- 1796** A BUILDING IN THE STYLE OF A CHURCH [FRONT DOOR AND PULPIT ON OPPOSITE SHORT WALLS OF THE RECTANGLE] IS CONSTRUCTED ON THE VILLAGE GREEN FOR FALMOUTH’S CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, TO REPLACE ITS MEETING HOUSE [FRONT DOOR AND PULPIT ON OPPOSITE LONG WALLS] THERE.
- 1797** The East End meeting house is built in Hatchville.
- 1798** Connecticut Missionary Society is formed.
- 1799** Massachusetts Missionary Society is formed.

## ***1800s***

- 1801** “Plan of Union” adopted by the General Congregational Association of Connecticut and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church; this plan is said to have eventually caused Congregationalists to lose as many as 2,000 churches west of New England as the country expanded; as one Congregationalist lamented: “They have milked our Congregational cows, but have made nothing but Presbyterian butter and cheese.”
- 1801** The Pilgrims’ Congregational church in Plymouth, Massachusetts is split along doctrinal lines; that is a forerunner of the significant Trinitarian/Unitarian division in American Congregationalism which becomes evident soon afterwards.
- 1802/1803** General Association of Massachusetts Proper is organized.
- 1805** Rev. Henry Ware of Unitarian orientation is chosen as Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard; in response, Trinitarian Congregationalists abandon Harvard.
- 1807** Andover Theological Seminary is formed with Hopkinsian and other Calvinists joining forces; subscribing to a very Calvinistic “Andover Creed” is made a requirement of those who teach there, so Trinitarian Congregational orthodoxy is maintained.
- 1810** American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions is formed.
- 1810** First Sunday School in Massachusetts is begun, in Beverly.
- 1815** Barnstable County Congregational churches petition General Court of Massachusetts to

- sell and divide Abner Hersey estate holdings they were bequeathed together.
- 1816** The separation of church and state is adopted in Connecticut.
- 1819** The separation of church and state is adopted in New Hampshire.
- 1820** Missionary work is begun in Hawaii by Congregationalists.
- 1820** A highly significant Dedham, Massachusetts court decision says that towns, not church congregations, own the Congregational church buildings, funds, and communion ware in their towns; that decision paves the way for many Trinitarian Congregational congregations to lose their church buildings to Unitarian Congregationalists.
- 1826** American Home Missionary Society is instituted.
- 1828** Conference of Churches in Barnstable County is formed; is a predecessor of our modern Barnstable Association.
- 1828** “Concio ad Clerum” address at Yale by Nathaniel Taylor launches New Haven Theology.
- 1832** Massachusetts Sabbath School Society is formed.
- 1833** An amendment to separate church and state in Massachusetts is approved overwhelmingly by a vote of Commonwealth voters and months later, in 1834, that amendment is “made effective by legislation.”<sup>(4)</sup>
- 1837** Presbyterian General Assembly, representing Old School Presbyterians, withdraws from the Plan of Union, formed in 1801, in part because many involved in it now espouse “New Haven Theology,” which Old School Presbyterians consider too liberal.
- 1839** A FRONT PORCH WITH VESTRY ABOVE IT IS ADDED TO THE CHURCH BUILDING OF THE FALMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.
- 1846** American Missionary Association is organized.
- 1847** Horace Bushnell’s *Christian Nurture* book is published.
- 1852** American General Convention of Congregational Churches is held at Albany, New York and decides to drop its involvement in the Plan of Union.
- 1853** Congregational Building Society is formed.
- 1853** Congregational Library formed.
- 1853** Antoinette Brown is ordained September 15 by Congregationalists to serve the Congregational church in South Butler, New York; she is the first ordained woman in a major American denomination; she was essentially ordained by her local church.
- 1857** THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF FALMOUTH IS MOVED ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE VILLAGE GREEN TO ITS PRESENT LOCATION, REBUILT, AND REMODELED, ADDING THE LOWER LEVEL, A NEW STEEPLE, AND THE CURRENT PEWS.
- 1859** General Conference of Massachusetts Congregational Churches is formed.
- 1859** Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* book is published.

- 1861** Civil War begins.
- 1865** Civil War ends.
- 1865** General American Council of Congregational Churches is held in Boston and adopts the “Boston Platform” and the “Burial Hill Declaration of 1865”; it presents the latter at the Burial Hill cemetery in Plymouth, Massachusetts.
- 1866** THE LIKELY YEAR WHEN BROWN PAINT IS ADDED TO SOME SECTIONS OF THE EXTERIOR OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF FALMOUTH.
- 1867** Connecticut Conference is organized.
- 1868** General Association of Massachusetts and General Conference of the Massachusetts Conference of Congregational Churches merge to form the General Association of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts.
- 1871** National Council of Congregational Churches is formed at Oberlin, Ohio, and puts forth “Oberlin Declaration” and “Declaration on the Unity of the Church”; this is the first of its triennial national meetings.
- 1873** Congregational House is founded in Boston.
- 1875** About this time, American Protestant intellectuals begin to take Darwin seriously.
- 1880s** In this period, some Congregational churches on Cape Cod begin to celebrate Christmas in their worship.
- 1881** Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor is formed in Maine.
- 1883** “1883 Declaration of Faith,” also called the “1883 Commission Creed,” is accepted by the National Council of Congregational Churches; this creed is said to show the liberalization of Calvinism, for example, by making no mention of predestination.
- 1886** Washington Gladden’s *Applied Christianity: Moral Aspects of Social Questions* book is published.
- 1886** Andover Theology Seminary professors’ *Progressive Orthodoxy* book is published; it is not “orthodox” for the times and it particularly disturbs some Congregationalists because “un-Christianized infants are not necessarily doomed to hell . . . the result was the ‘Andover Controversy’ in which the five professors were tried for heresy.”<sup>5</sup>
- 1890** MISS ANTOINETTE PALMER JONES OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF FALMOUTH HELPS CREATE FLOATING CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR FOR MARTIME PERSONNEL AROUND THE WORLD.
- 1891** First International Congregational Council is held in London.
- 1891** THE SANCTUARY OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF FALMOUTH IS REMODELED, ADDING A TIN CEILING, STENCILING, AND AN EXPANDED PULPIT PLATFORM.
- 1897** Rev. Charles Sheldon’s *In His Steps* book is published; it challenges readers by asking, “What Would Jesus Do?”

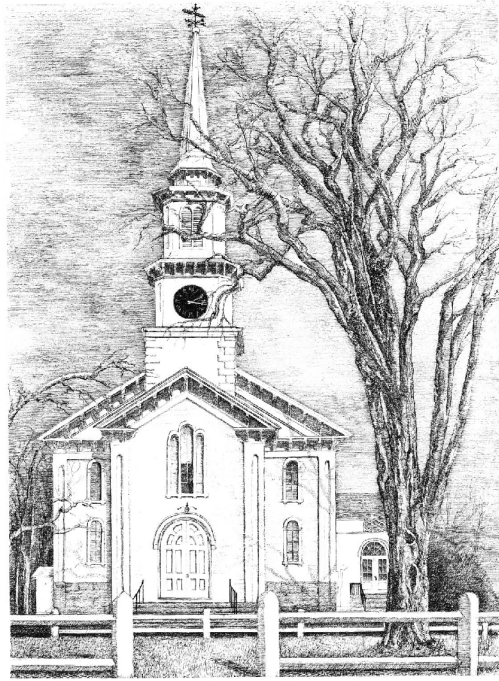


## ***1900s***

- 1911** THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF FALMOUTH IS PAINTED COMPLETELY WHITE AGAIN AND ELECTRICITY IS INSTALLED IN IT.
- 1913** “Kansas City Statement of Faith” is adopted by the National Council of Congregational Churches; it represents an even greater liberalization of theology and also embodies the spirit of the Social Gospel movement.
- 1920** Fourth International Congregational Council is held in Boston.
- 1928** The Massachusetts Congregational Conference and the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society merge to form the Massachusetts Congregational Conference and Missionary Society, which is the forerunner of the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC.
- 1931** The National Council of Congregational Churches and the General Convention of Christian Churches merge to form the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches.
- 1942-1943** THE SANCTUARY OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF FALMOUTH IS REMODELED WITH A SPLIT CHANCEL, AND THE CENTER AISLE IS WIDENED.
- 1957** The United Church of Christ is created through the national merger of the Congregational-Christian and Evangelical and Reformed denominations in America.
- 1958** THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BUILDING IS ADDED TO THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF FALMOUTH, IN MEMORY OF JAMES M. HILLS.
- 1960-1961** THE SANCTUARY OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF FALMOUTH IS REMODELED, WITH THE INSTALLATION OF A PLASTER CEILING, CHOIR PEWS, AND NEW OAK AND CORK TILE FLOORING LAID OVER EXISTING FLOORING .
- 1992** THE CONSTANCE AND RAYMOND FAXON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CENTER IS ADDED TO THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF FALMOUTH FACILITY, NEARLY DOUBLING ITS SIZE.

## ***2000s***

- 2008** OUR CHURCH CELEBRATES ITS 300<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, AT WHICH TIME ITS SANCTUARY IS REFURBISHED AND ITS KITCHEN IS REMODELED AND UPGRADED.
- 2020** The Massachusetts Conference joined with the Connecticut and Rhode Island Conferences of the UCC to form the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ.



Our Falmouth Church

## ENDNOTES

1. This image is of a painting of Martin Luther, created in 1529 by Lucas Cranach the Elder. The image is in the public domain. The painting is at the Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt.  
[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Martin\\_Luther\\_by\\_Lucas\\_Cranach\\_der\\_%C3%84ltere.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Martin_Luther_by_Lucas_Cranach_der_%C3%84ltere.jpg)
2. This image is of a woodcut of Ulrich Zwingli, created in 1531 by Hans Asper. The image is in the public domain. This image first appeared in the edition of Zwingli's writings, 1529–1545, published by Christoph Froschauer, “the first printer in Zurich.”  
[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ulrich\\_Zwingli\\_by\\_Hans\\_Aasper\\_1531.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ulrich_Zwingli_by_Hans_Aasper_1531.jpg)
3. Albert Edward McKinley, *The Suffrage Franchise in the Thirteen English Colonies in America* (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1905), 324.
4. Jacob C. Meyer, *Church and State in Massachusetts From 1740 to 1833* (Cleveland: Western University Press, 1930), 218–220.
5. J. William T. Youngs, *The Congregationalists* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 315.

## APPENDIX I

### Our Church's Membership Through the Years

Due to gaps in the existent records, it's not possible to chart our church's membership over the past three centuries precisely, nonetheless, it is possible to secure a good overall view of it.

1708: In the year our church was gathered, our church had at least 20 members—the 19 people dismissed from the Barnstable church to gather our church and Rev. Joseph Metcalf, who was ordained then to serve our church. It's likely that many other people from Falmouth were also involved in our church, though not necessarily as members, as the law then required citizens to attend public worship each week on the Sabbath.

1742: This year is notable because 64 people joined the church in that year. This appears to have been due to the influence of the Great Awakening, a time when some other New England Congregational churches were seeing significant increases in their membership. For the sake of comparison, note that from 1732 through 1741, a total of just 42 people joined our church.

Also, in 1742, 103 persons [35 men and 68 women] participated in that year's largest Lord's Supper service. That total figure likely is somewhat less than the total membership of our church at that time.

In 1742 and later, the Lord's Supper likely was offered only to members of our church, and members were called to account by the church if they were frequently absent from it. Thus, in this period, the largest number of people attending that sacrament gives us a close approximation of our church's total membership.

Though our church likely benefitted from the Great Awakening in 1742, I have found no conclusive evidence that our church was one of the so-called "New Light" churches promoting that Awakening. Also, the evidence is inconclusive as to whether our church's minister at that time, Rev. Samuel Palmer, was himself more "New Light" or "Old Light" in orientation.

In subsequent years, after 1742, the largest number of people participating in the Lord's Supper in our church—giving us a clue as to its total membership—was as follows:

1750 – 67 persons  
1760 – 73 persons  
1770 – 70 persons  
1781 – 70 persons

1809: This year is significant because 114 people joined our church during it. This was in the period known as the Second Great Awakening. Likely, revival meetings then being held in

Falmouth were responsible, at least in part, for this large number of new members. Also, this appears, by far, to have been the largest number of new members ever received in a given year in our church to our present time.

The figures in the following grouping are based on membership statistics of the Falmouth church available in the church's records or in denominational records. All the figures are for full membership status in the church. They do not include figures for the category of Associate Member, which our church has had since 1936. The percentage figure after each year shows what proportion our church's membership was to Falmouth's total population, based on the U.S. census of that same year.

Church Membership	Percentage of Falmouth Population
1827 – 171 members	
1834 – 243 members	
1840 – 256 members	[9.8%]
1850 – 215 members [67 men and 148 women]	[8.5%]
1860 – 194 members	[7.8%]
1870 – 225 members	[10%]
1880 – 190 members	[7.8%]
1890 – 147 members	[5.7%]
1900 – 146 members [39 men and 107 women]	[4.1%]
1910 – 126 members	[4%]
1920 – 107 members	[3%]
1930 – 156 members	[3.2%]
1940 – 153 members	[2.2%]
1950 – 237 members [86 men and 151 women]	[2.7%]
1960 – 313 members	[2.4%]
1970 – 460 members	[2.8%]
1980 – 509 members	[2.1%]
1990 – 526 members	[1.8%]
2000 – 593 members	[1.8%]

## APPENDIX II

### Congregational Records: What's in Them?

This appendix focuses on the early records and history of Falmouth's First Congregational Church and First Congregational Society. However, those records and that history likely bear many similarities to the records and histories of other early Congregational churches in New England. I have included this appendix in this book, in part to help those who are researching other New England Congregational churches. I originally compiled this information for members of the Falmouth Genealogical Society.

It should be kept in mind, however, that from the beginning, Congregational churches have considered themselves autonomous, as they believe Christ is at the head of each local church. Thus, while certainly there have been common trends in their record keeping and histories, they also have acted quite independently at times, following their own sense of Christ's will for their faith and order.

#### **Proprietor and Falmouth Town Records**

1600s: Even before Falmouth was incorporated as a town in 1686, proprietors' records of the community were kept. Those records indicate when a minister for the community was first secured and given land in order to preach the gospel in the community. That minister was Jonathan Dunham, a lay person, who was given community land in 1677.

1686–1770s: Falmouth was legally incorporated as a town, but at first was still referred to as Suckneset. Up until the 1770s, records of Falmouth town meetings show action taken on such matters as:

- the securing of ministers for the town [usually in conjunction with the church] and the determination of the level of compensation for those ministers.
- the building and/or rebuilding and maintenance of a meeting house for the town and the decision where to locate that meeting house. The meeting house was to be used for worship to satisfy Plymouth Colony laws, but also could be used by the town for secular purposes.

#### **Falmouth Congregational Church Records**

1708 into the 19<sup>th</sup> century: The Church of Christ in Falmouth, predecessor to the modern First Congregational Church of Falmouth, was gathered in 1708. At that time, individuals likely agreed to a covenant by which the church was formed as an independent ecclesiastical body. Virtually without a doubt, all those individuals were basically Calvinistic in orientation, and all believed they had had a conversion experience of God's saving grace.

Likely, the Church of Christ in Falmouth began to keep its own church records, beginning

with its gathering in 1708. However, those early records have long been lost. The surviving records of the church begin on November 24, 1731, with the ordination of Rev. Samuel Palmer to serve as the pastor of the church. Our church's records continue from then to the present time. The following types of information can be found in those church records up into the 19<sup>th</sup> century:

- ORDINATION of the ministers called to serve our Falmouth church and those who participated in those ordinations
- ACCEPTANCE and RESIGNATION LETTERS of the ministers who served our church
- CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

“IN FULL COMMUNION” – Through most of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, an experience [conversion/regeneration/rebirth] of God's saving grace was required for membership in our Falmouth church. Early on, such persons were said to be received as members “in full communion.” Such members were eligible to receive the church's two ordinances [sacraments]: the Lord's Supper and Baptism for themselves and their children. Early Congregationalists often referred to the sacrament of Holy Communion as the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Male members in full communion were also allowed to vote in church meetings.

The requirement of a saving grace experience for “In Full Communion” membership seems to have been discontinued in our church from about 1790-1816, then reinstated, then dropped again completely sometime around the very beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Apparently all granted membership in our church over the centuries were eligible to receive both ordinances.

- OTHER CATEGORIES OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP [though not practiced in our Falmouth church, apparently] were as follows:

“HALF-WAY COVENANT” for adults baptized as children

Beginning in the mid-1600s, some Puritan churches also practiced the so-called Half-Way Covenant for individuals who had been baptized in the church in their earlier years but who, in their adult years, could not testify to a saving grace experience of their own. Under this plan, such individuals could become members of the church by giving intellectual assent to the faith and “owning” the church's covenant. Such Half-Way Covenant membership brought those individuals more fully into the life of the church. It allowed them to have their own children baptized. However, they were prevented from receiving the Lord's Supper.

‘HALF-WAY COVENANT’ for unbaptized adults

Over time, some Puritan churches extended Half-Way Covenant membership to individuals who had never been baptized. Thus, upon assenting to the faith and owning the covenant, those individuals became baptized and were considered eligible to have their children baptized by the church. They could not receive the Lord’s Supper.

Some churches, but not our Falmouth church, even kept three-column membership records to distinguish the three types of membership mentioned above: In Full Communion and the two types of Half-Way Covenant membership.

–MEMBERSHIP IN OTHER CHURCHES – Membership records in our Falmouth church sometimes indicate that a person previously was a member of another church or that he/she was dismissed from our church to join another church.

–BAPTISMS – Baptisms usually took place in Sabbath worship services, except they were sometimes conducted in a home because of illness. For instance, Katharine Lee Bates was baptized in her parents’ home, as her father, then the minister of our Falmouth church, was then seriously ill. I’ve read that in the earlier years of Congregationalism, baptisms often took place on the Sunday following a child’s birth. However, Falmouth church records show that sometimes a number of siblings were baptized together after one or both of their parents became members of our church.

–CHURCH DISCIPLINE – Members of our church who entered into covenant with one another also kept watch over one another to help each other live the Christian life. There was also concern that if members failed to live up to their Christian duties, their church itself would lose its special sacred quality and its mission would be compromised. Given those concerns, members of our Falmouth church met numerous times in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to evaluate the behavior of church members who were suspected of having strayed in some way.

After judging that a member was guilty of wrongdoing, the church usually urged that individual to recognize his/her error, repent of it, and confess it publicly to the church, seeking the church’s forgiveness.

–When individuals did not repent, they were often prohibited from receiving the Lord’s Supper in the church. Their membership could also be suspended. In the worst cases, they would be excommunicated from the church.

–When individuals judged guilty did respond sincerely with repentance and confession as the church had urged, those individuals were usually forgiven



and fully reinstated in the church with all privileges of membership.

Sometimes church members were also called upon to settle a disagreement between members.

Some of the discipline cases which appear in the records of our church were as follows:

—On August 5, 1741, our church met and decided to reject, as unsubstantiated, the claims of Robert Parker that he kept away from the church's ordinance of the Lord's Supper because Deacon Moses Hatch of the church had wronged Parker. Parker claimed that Hatch let some of his sheep out of Hatch's pasture to Parker's damage. Parker also claimed that Hatch accused him of pulling down Hatch's fence. The church admonished Robert Parker for his unproven charges. On December 30th of that year, the church met at Deacon Moses Hatch's house and heard the two men "express their Forgiveness of and Charity towards each other" regarding these matters. By vote, the church then extended to Parker the "Christian Forgiveness & Charity," which Parker now sought from our church.

—On June 30, 1754, our church met and decided to accept Reliance Lawrence's declaration of innocence and freedom from the sin of fornication. The church noticed that she had given birth to a child eight months after her marriage to Samuel Lawrence of Sandwich. She was formerly Reliance Davis.

—On August 11, 1762, our church met and found Tamar Dexter not guilty of the charge of excessive drinking but guilty of false speaking to the church when she denied that her gown had been burned. But because Tamar admitted this wrong and sought the church's forgiveness, the church forgave her.

—On July 19, 1809, our church voted unanimously to excommunicate new member Samuel Madan Dewey. As the record reads: "Whereas our Brother Samuel M. Dewey has heretofore in a public Meeting, without authority arraign'd the whole Church before him, to give account of their experiences & if not, publicly to humble themselves before him & Mr. Bates (a Baptist Minister) & others not of our communion, & whereas he has spoken disrespectfully & uncharitably both of minister & people & in less than fourteen days after a public & solemn avowal of our holy covenant has broken it & of his own accord absolved his relations to us & by joining the Baptist Church, has denied this to be a true Church of Christ we do hereby consider him as excommunicated from our Church therefore,

voted that he the sd Saml M. Dewey be & is considered as excommunicated.”

See Chapter 8 – “Rev. Henry Lincoln and the 1812 Quissett Revival” in this book for information on the circumstances surrounding that excommunication.

- SELECTION OF LAY MEMBERS – At meetings of the church, lay members were sometimes chosen to serve in special church positions, such as:
  - to “tune the Psalm” for Sabbath worship
  - to be ordained and serve as a deacon of the church
  - to serve on a committee to secure temporary preaching or the permanent settlement of a minister for the church

### **First Congregational Society of Falmouth Records**

About 1777: The Congregational Society of Falmouth was formed to oversee those aspects of the Falmouth church’s life that the town itself had charge over up to this point. Serving as an official committee of the town and required to obey numerous Commonwealth laws, this society’s records were initially recorded alongside the records of the town. By 1804, however, the Congregational Society of Falmouth maintained the records of its legally warned meetings in its own ledger book. In time, the word “First” was added to this society’s name when it became evident that there might be another Congregational Society in the town, presumably connected with the East End Meeting House.

Churches in this period usually needed to have such societies [or parishes, as they were sometimes called] associated with them, as the churches themselves had no legal standing in Massachusetts. But the society or parish associated with a church did have such standing.

Since the beginning of our Falmouth church as an independent organization in 1708, our church had benefitted from the expenditure of town tax dollars to build and maintain the church’s meeting house and to compensate the church’s minister, among other things. The Congregational Society now oversaw such matters regarding the church on behalf of the town. The following types of information can be found in the society’s records:

- the securing of ministers for the town [usually in conjunction with the church] and the determination of the level of compensation for those ministers
- letters of acceptance and resignation from the church’s ministers
- the building and/or rebuilding and maintenance of a meeting house(s) for the use of the town’s church
- the securing of funding through town tax dollars to support the church
- financial support of church choirs
- the sale, taxing, and rental of pews in the meeting house, including charts of those pew locations
- the purchase and maintenance of utilities for the church, such as wood stoves and duct work

Following a ratification vote of Commonwealth citizens on November 11, 1833, the separation of church and state became part of the Constitution of Massachusetts in early 1834. At that point, the First Congregational Society no longer had access to town tax dollars to support our church. Instead, it now taxed just its own members for the church's support. Society members were not necessarily members of our church.

Beginning in 1887, the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts allowed churches to become incorporated. In 1936, both our church and our society voted to join the new incorporated body known as the "First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts." At that point, the society and its separate record keeping came to an end.



The Lord's Prayer in our church's parlor

*Cross stitch artist:*  
*Harriet Byron Weeks (Hamlen)*  
 1885 - 1900

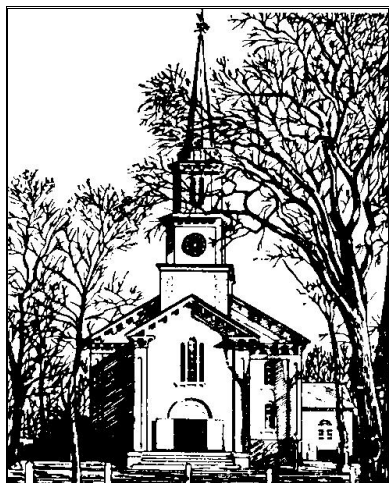
With that merger, society members were automatically considered Associate Members of our church. That apparently was a new category of membership in our church, created, at least initially, for this purpose. Unlike Members, Associate Members cannot have their standing transferred to other churches. Also, Massachusetts law imposes some restrictions on the involvement of such Associate Members in their churches. Subsequently, the names of our church's Associate Members have been kept in our church's records. When the society merged with our church in this new corporation, all the real and personal property owned by the society was conveyed to the newly formed corporation.

The First Congregational Society of Falmouth records are at the Falmouth Town Hall, the Falmouth Historical Society, and our church. For more information about the town and church relationship in Massachusetts, see Chapter 16 – "Town, Church, and the First Congregational Society of Falmouth" in this book.

## APPENDIX III

### A Quiz: Our Falmouth Church and Congregationalism

[Answers in Appendix V]



1. The first person to serve as a minister in our community, even before our town was incorporated in 1686, was \_\_\_\_\_, a layman at that time. He is buried in the town of \_\_\_\_\_ in Massachusetts.
2. At the time of its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1808, our church purchased new communion ware and gave its old communion ware as a gift to the newly gathered Congregational church in the distant New England town of \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Following the naming practice of other Puritan churches at that time, our church in its earliest years likely was known as the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. One of our church's earliest settled ministers, Rev. \_\_\_\_\_, was essentially forced to leave our church and the Congregational ministry because of discord with his wife, who was the daughter of a Falmouth family. It was said that our minister moved to North Carolina, hoping to enter the ministry of the Anglican Church, but did not succeed in that. At different times, he and his wife each sought a divorce, but Massachusetts courts refused to grant them one.
5. A seamstress in our church named \_\_\_\_\_ was noted for helping to found \_\_\_\_\_ in 1890, which became a world-wide nautical branch of \_\_\_\_\_. She also appears to have been the first woman authorized by our Barnstable Association to serve as a licensed Congregational preacher.
6. Following the resignation of our minister in 1919, our church voted to federate with the \_\_\_\_\_ church in downtown Falmouth. At the time, our church stated its preference that our church's minister would be the Senior Minister and the other church's minister would be the Assistant Minister in the newly created federated church. The other church rejected our offer.
7. After Hurricane Bob's August 1991 destruction of the upper story in our church's new addition, which was then under construction, the design of our Fellowship Hall was upgraded and re-built to withstand \_\_\_\_\_ mile per hour winds.
8. In 1832, our church joined the other Congregational churches in Barnstable County in supporting Rev. Samuel Munson as our missionary over seas through the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Munson's missionary work came to a tragic end in 1834 when he and his companion, Rev. Henry Lyman, were \_\_\_\_\_.

9. When our church's sanctuary was remodeled in 1943, our central pulpit was removed, our present "split chancel" with a pulpit and lectern was created, and \_\_\_\_\_ pew sections were removed to give our sanctuary much of the open space it has today. Also, a total of nearly \_\_\_\_\_ inches were cut off the pews along the center aisle to widen it. Can you find where those pew sections were removed from? Hint: Look to see which numbered pews are missing.
10. In their January 1980 annual report, the deacons of our church noted that there had been a recent, obvious innovation in our church's worship services. That innovation was that \_\_\_\_\_.
11. At our church's worship service on January 20, 1974, a piece of paper went up in smoke. It was \_\_\_\_\_.
12. In 1891, a major alteration and repair of our church's sanctuary was undertaken at a cost of slightly over \$2,000. Of that total, \$537 was spent for \_\_\_\_\_ and \$515 was spent for \_\_\_\_\_.
13. In 1874, our church voted that at future Holy Communion services the \_\_\_\_\_ should be \_\_\_\_\_.
14. After the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, the women of Falmouth hung \_\_\_\_\_ on our church and on its pulpit and walls.
15. Technically speaking, what is the difference between a meeting house and a church?
16. Early Congregationalists were opposed to having "dim religious light" in their meeting houses. What did that mean?
17. In early New England, a woman's hairdresser might ask her, "Which is your meeting house side?" What was the hairdresser actually asking?
18. Where is the last remaining example of a 17<sup>th</sup>-century New England meeting house to be found?
19. In the midst of frigid winters, it was sometimes necessary for ice to be broken in the unheated meeting houses of early New England. Why was that ice broken?
20. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a terrible sound was heard at the close of worship in many New England meeting houses. How would you describe that sound and what caused it?
21. In 1886, about what percentage of Massachusetts Congregational churches included the collection of an offering during their worship, according to a survey of 422 such churches?

22. Early New England Congregationalists described the distinctive government of their local churches as [choose one or more]:

- a Monarchy [hereditary chief of state, absolute sovereignty of one person] \_\_\_\_\_
- an Autocracy [one person has unlimited power] \_\_\_\_\_
- a Plutocracy [government by the wealthy class] \_\_\_\_\_
- an Aristocracy [government by the best individuals or the privileged] \_\_\_\_\_
- a Democracy [government by the people] \_\_\_\_\_
- an Ochlocracy [mob rule] \_\_\_\_\_

23. Horse dung likely played a small but significant role in the history of our Falmouth church. Who used it, and what was it used for?

24. The First [1740], Second [1792], and Third [1857] Great Awakenings in America were powerfully impacted by "concerts" held on a regular basis—often monthly or quarterly—by Congregational and other Protestant churches in America. What were those "concerts," and what was their purpose?

25. Up until the end of the Civil War, the Congregational home missionary movement was notably unsuccessful in the Midwestern state of \_\_\_\_\_, as "New England religion and Yankee preachers" were not popular there.

26. Congregational home missionaries are credited with founding and/or substantially nurturing many Midwestern and Western colleges in their early 19<sup>th</sup> century years, such that those colleges were identified as "Congregational." Which two of the following ten colleges would not be included in a list of such Congregational schools (choose two)?

_____ Illinois College [1829]	Jacksonville, Illinois
_____ Oberlin College [1833]	Oberlin, Ohio
_____ Marietta College [1835]	Marietta, Ohio
_____ Willamette University [1842]	Salem, Oregon
_____ University of the Pacific [1851]	Stockton, California
_____ Whitman College [1859]	Walla Walla, Washington
_____ Carleton College [1866]	Northfield, Minnesota
_____ Doane College [1872]	Crete, Nebraska
_____ Colorado College [1874]	Colorado Springs, Colorado
_____ Pomona College [1887]	Claremont, California

27. What is a "mugwump?" And which early Massachusetts Congregational minister played a key role in introducing that word to the English language?

28. We can learn from our failures as well as our virtuous acts. In 1834, the preaching of a famous minister, who had recently served a Boston Congregational church, was blamed for

helping to incite an angry mob, which vandalized and then burned down the Ursuline Convent on Mt. Benedict in Charlestown. Who was this minister whose outspoken religious prejudice may have contributed to that tragic event? Earlier, in 1828, that same minister preached in our Falmouth church on the Village Green, when the organization of Massachusetts Congregational ministers held their annual meeting there.

29. Prior to the Civil War, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was strongly criticized for its mission work among two groups of people who kept slaves and even had laws against educating their slaves or their slaves' children. The ABCFM was not willing to tell its slave-holding converts in those missions that such behavior made them non-Christians. Those two missions were in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

30. Our Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ was said to have had the first \_\_\_\_\_ ever televised. It took place at a Conference summer camp program in 1951 in Wilbraham, Massachusetts.

31. Approximately when did Massachusetts Congregational churches begin to use individual, small glasses for the Lord's Supper? And what two factors helped lead to that decision?

32. The first Sabbath School in Massachusetts—the forerunner of all our modern Sunday schools in the Commonwealth—was held in 1810 by two young Congregational women, Joanna Prince and Hannah Hill. They conducted their school in the home of Joanna Prince's mother. They met twice on Sundays, in the morning and following afternoon worship. Which Massachusetts town was the site of that first Sabbath school?



Our parsonage and church in winter



## APPENDIX IV

### Select Bibliography on American Congregationalism

#### —OVERVIEW OF AMERICAN CONGREGATIONALISM—

John von Rohr, *The Shaping of American Congregationalism 1620-1957* (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 1992).

*This is a modern, very helpful overall source of information. The book divides Congregationalism into eras and looks at each era from the perspectives of history, theology, polity, worship, and mission. A brief summary concludes the chapter on each era.*

J. William T. Youngs, *The Congregationalists*, Denominations in America, Number 4 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990).

*This is another valuable, modern, overall source of information. This book contains an extensive biographical section on noted Congregationalists. A thumbnail sketch is given of each figure along with a list of their major writings and books published about their lives.*

Arthur A. Rouner, Jr., *The Congregational Way of Life* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1960).

*In presenting the key values of Congregationalism, this book seems to capture Congregationalism's best spirit. Having served several Congregational heritage congregations in the UCC, I'm glad I found this book near the beginning of my ministry.*

#### —NEW ENGLAND CONGREGATIONALISM—

Richard H. Taylor, *The Churches of Christ of the Congregational Way in New England* (Distribution by author, 1989).

*In brief form, utilizing a code, this book provides the gathering dates plus information on transitions, name changes, mergers, and extinctions of virtually every Congregational church that has ever existed in New England. It also indicates any sources giving alternative dates for a church's gathering. This work also traces the appearance of churches in the national yearbooks of American Congregationalism and, more recently, of the United Church of Christ.*

#### —The Puritans: Non-Separatist and Separatist [Pilgrims]—

Robert M. Bartlett, *The Pilgrim Way* (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1971).

*This is a helpful study of the Pilgrims, from their struggles in England to their development of Plymouth Plantation, with particular focus on John Robinson, their pastor and spiritual leader.*

John Adair, *Founding Fathers: The Puritans in England and America* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986).

*This book presents a helpful overview of the Puritans' roots in England and their contribution to America. The story of the Puritans is told with particular emphasis on John Winthrop, the*

*Massachusetts Bay Colony, and developments in England, such as the Civil War, which affected the Puritans in America. This work also contains a helpful bibliography on Puritanism.*

Horton Davies, *The Worship of the American Puritans, 1629-1730* (Morgan, Pennsylvania: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1990).

*This book is a fine exploration of the theology and practice of New England Puritan worship in their first hundred years in America. Preaching, sacraments, and architecture are among the topics covered. The explanation for many worship practices commonly found in the modern UCC can be found here.*

### —EARLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING HOUSES—

Edmund W. Sinnot, *Meetinghouse & Church in Early New England* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1963).

*If one could only read one book on early Congregational church architecture, this is the one I would suggest. This book portrays the evolution from meeting house to church in early New England. It contains many pictures and a check list of meeting houses and churches in New England that were built by 1830 and are still standing as of 1963.*

### —MASSACHUSETTS CONGREGATIONALISM—

Harold Field Worthley, *An Inventory of the Records of the Particular (Congregational) Churches of Massachusetts Gathered 1620-1805*, Harvard Theological Studies XXV (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

*This is a very well documented inventory of the location, date of gathering, early ministers, elders, and deacons, and name and location of still-existent records of virtually all the Congregational churches in Massachusetts gathered up to the year 1805, including most of the Native American Congregational churches.*

Joseph S. Clark, *A Historical Sketch of the Congregational Churches in Massachusetts from 1620 to 1858* (Boston: Congregational Board of Publication, 1858).

*This is a key work for understanding the early history of the Congregational churches in the Commonwealth. The book is organized by decade, indicating both important developments and the congregations gathered during that period.*

Jacob Meyer, *Church and State in Massachusetts From 1740 to 1833: A Chapter in the History of the Development of Individual Freedom* (Cleveland: Western Reserve University Press, 1930).

*During the years mentioned, this study helps one understand the change of Massachusetts laws regarding taxation for religion, Congregational churches as the Standing Order, the actions of dissenters against the Standing Order, Unitarian and Trinitarian Congregational differences, and the eventual separation of church and state in Massachusetts—passed finally by a 10-1 margin, with late, but nonetheless very strong, Trinitarian Congregational support.*

Tiffany Vail et al, *Highlights of the First 200 Years of the Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ* (Framingham, Massachusetts: Commission on Communication, Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ. 1999).

*This is a brief but broadly focused and insightful overview of the history of the Massachusetts Conference, which was published for the Conference's 1999 bicentennial celebration.*

### –THEOLOGICAL MOVEMENTS IN CONGREGATIONALISM–

Elizabeth Nordbeck, "Theological Tradition of Congregationalists," in Daniel W. Johnson and Charles Hambrick-Stowe, ed., *Theology and Identity: Traditions, Movements, and Polity in the United Church of Christ* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1990, 3-16).

*This chapter gives a helpful, overall sketch of American Congregationalism and the evolution of its theology up to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.*

Edwin Scott Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957).

*This book explores the religious context prior to the Awakening as well as its subsequent effects. This is a good, basic history of the Great Awakening, which is often dated as having begun in 1740 with the appearance of itinerant English preacher George Whitefield in New England. Jonathan Edwards was the primary theologian of the Awakening.*

Cedric B. Cowing, *The Saving Remnant: Religion and the Settling of New England* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

*This book seeks to explain the religious culture of early New England and the origins of the Great Awakening. The author divides England into two sectors and suggests that people's approach to Puritanism in New England depended upon which of those two sectors their ancestors were from. The author identifies England's southeastern sector with rational religion and ethics and the northwestern sector with evangelical, otherworldly spirituality. The author also traces the tension and interplay between those two approaches to religious faith as they played out in the early history of American Puritanism. A fascinating book and very helpful for understanding the Great Awakening.*

Joseph A. Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins & The New Divinity Movement: Calvinism, the Congregational Ministry, and Reform in New England between the Great Awakenings* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Christian University Press, 1981).

*Samuel Hopkins set out to improve the Calvinist theological system of his mentor, Jonathan Edwards, in part by substituting a moral impulse to do good for Edwards' aesthetic impulse to appreciate the beauty of God's purposes. "Hopkinsians," or "New Divinity Men," as they were sometimes called, were often seen as the next generation successors to Edwards' "New England Theology." They were prominent participants in the so-called Second Great Awakening. Many of the first members of the Massachusetts Missionary Society, founded in 1799, were Hopkinsians. That society was the earliest organized forerunner to today's Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ.*

David W. Kling, *A Field of Divine Wonders: The New Divinity and Village Revivals in Northwestern Connecticut, 1792-1822* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993).

*This book tells of the Second Great Awakening. It gathered strength in northwestern Connecticut and then spread out to have a profound influence in western Massachusetts and elsewhere. This awakening contributed to the rise of several Congregational missionary societies, including the Massachusetts Missionary Society in 1799.*

Leo P. Hirrel, *Children of Wrath: New School Calvinism and Antebellum Reform* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1998).

*This study tells of the development and spread of New Haven Theology, initiated by Yale professor Nathaniel William Taylor in the 1820s. This new theology, which followed after the Second Great Awakening, stressed moral behavior rather than piety as the center of religious experience. It spurred additional missionary and reform efforts and was embraced by numerous Congregationalists of the period, including Lyman Beecher.*

Charles Howard Hopkins, *The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940).

*This book traces the development of the Social Gospel movement, which was a response to the impact of the growing industrialization of American society as well as significant changes in scientific thinking during this period.*

William R. Hutchinson, ed., *Between the Times: The Travail of the Protestant Establishment in America, 1900-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

*This book contains essays from scholars on the struggles and adjustment of mainline Protestantism—including Congregationalism—to the increasing pluralism in America in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. One scholar has referred to the period after about 1920 as the “second disestablishment” of American Protestantism. This book contains interesting information on the severance of denominational ties by colleges; the Federal Council of Churches, forerunner of today’s National Council of Churches; the churches in the war years; and more.*

### —NOTABLE EVANGELISM, MISSION, AND JUSTICE MINISTRIES—

William E. Strong, *The Story of the American Board: An Account of the First Hundred Years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1910).

*This is a fascinating account of the Board’s creation in 1810 by the General Association of Massachusetts Proper [a forerunner of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ] and its subsequent sponsoring of missionaries across our world, including their work with Native Americans. In 1820, the Board’s first missionaries arrived in the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) after a five-month voyage from Boston.*

Joseph B. Clark, *Leavening the Nation: The Story of American Home Missions*. (New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1903).

*Written by the Secretary of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society, this book seeks to tell*

*the story of Christian missions in America, not by denomination, but as Home Missions claims to function, by following "the people, as the fisherman follows the fish." Chapters in the book deal with missions in different regions of the country. Also, there are chapters on "Woman's Part" in missions, "Home Missions and the Immigrant Problem," and "New England Today."*

Fred L. Brownlee, *New Day Ascending* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1946).

*Written at the time of the AMA's hundredth anniversary, this book tells the story of the American Missionary Association's development from the Amistad event, its early struggle against slavery, its founding of colleges for African Americans in the South, following the Civil War, and many of its other mission efforts to provide for minority groups in American society. The AMA was one of the predecessors of the United Church Board for Homeland Missions of the United Church of Christ.*

Victor B. Howard, *Conscience and Slavery: The Evangelistic Calvinist Domestic Missions, 1837-1861* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1990).

*This book looks at the struggle over slavery in both church and state prior to the Civil War. The author focuses on America's Calvinist churches, such as the Congregationalists and Presbyterians, and upon their missionary efforts through such groups as the American Home Missionary Society and the American Missionary Association. According to the author, a key motivating force in this struggle was the post-millennial belief, widely-spread in Calvinist churches, that the Kingdom of God was coming to be established in America and that God would help faithful Christians in their reform efforts, such as Abolition.*

C. Howard Hopkins, "A History of Social Action" in *Social Action*, Volume VIII, Number 5, May 15, 1942 (New York: Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches).

*This small booklet notes a number of social achievements of Congregationalists through their history, with particular emphasis on the Social Gospel movement beginning in the late 1800s and the formation of social action commissions of the National Council of Congregational Churches.*

### –DOCTRINE, POLITY, AND ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT WITHIN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONALISM–

Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*, reprint from Scribners' 1893 edition (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1969).

*This book contains text from key documents in the history of Congregationalism, from Robert Browne's statement on Congregational principles in 1582 to the "Commission" Creed of 1883 of the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States of America.*

William E. Barton, *The Law of Congregational Usage*, new and revised edition (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1923).

*Do you have a question about Congregational polity—the polity that, to a large extent, underlies the polity of our modern UCC? This is the basic source I always turn to. The format of this book with its answers to questions makes it easy to use. Its helpful answers are often accompanied by classic quotes from earlier Congregational authors. For example, some of the questions*

answered are these: "Are proxy votes permitted?" "Who may impose [the laying on of] hands [in ordination]?" "Do Congregationalists acknowledge self-baptism?" and "Should a minister received from another organization be re-ordained?"

### —CONGREGATIONALISM AS A NATIONAL DENOMINATION—

Lyman E. Hood, *The National Council of Congregational Churches of the United States* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, about 1901).

*This book tells the story of the first eleven triennial meetings of the National Council of Congregational Churches, which were held over thirty years. The Council's first meeting was in Oberlin, Ohio, in 1871. The book discusses the function of the Council and includes its By-laws. It also reviews five important meetings of Congregationalists held before the Council's creation: the Newtown Synod [1637], the Cambridge Synod [1646-48], the Albany Convention [1852], and the Boston Council [1865].*

Charles Emerson Burton, *The National Council Digest* (New York: Executive Committee of the National Council, 1930).

*This book describes itself as "a compilation of all the important acts of The National Council of Congregational Churches in the United States . . . from . . . its organization at Oberlin, Ohio, on November 17, 1871."*

Executive Committee of The General Council, *Digest of Minutes of Meetings of The General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches of the United States: 1931-1965* (New York: The General Council, 1971).

*This book is a helpful compilation of reports and actions taken at General Council meetings in the period noted.*

### —CONGREGATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOLS—

Asa Bullard, *Fifty Years With the Sabbath Schools* (Boston: Lockwood, Brooks, and Company, 1886).

*Rev. Asa Bullard was associated with the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society from 1834 when he became its general agent until 1888 when he died. In this book, he discusses the evolution of the Sabbath School movement. In addition to providing historical information, other chapters deal with topics such as "Revival of the Study of the Catechism," "Teaching the Children Temperance," and "Evils Resulting from Sabbath Schools."*

Anne M. Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution 1790-1880* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

*This is a scholarly overview and analysis of the rise of Sunday schools in Baptist, Congregational, Low Church Episcopal, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches in America. Drawing from records of the interdenominational American Sunday School Union, founded in 1824, as well as other resources, this book presents the larger picture of the movement of which the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society was a part.*

## APPENDIX V

### Answers to the Quiz in Appendix III

See chapter [numbers] below for information on these answers.



Faxon portico entrance

1. Jonathan Dunham was the minister. In 1684, he went on to serve a church in Edgartown on Martha's Vineyard. There, Dunham was ordained. He died and was buried there in 1717. Samuel Shiverick, another layman, served as the minister in our community after Dunham. [3]
2. Montpelier, Vermont [17]
3. Church of Christ in Falmouth [23]
4. The minister was Rev. Josiah Marshall, who came to Falmouth in 1724 and was ordained that year on August 19. [3]
5. Antoinette Palmer Jones helped found Floating Christian Endeavor, a branch of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor. [21]
6. Methodist church [19]
7. It was redesigned to withstand 110 mile per hour winds rather than just the 90 mile per hour winds, which the building code then required. The destruction in 1991 was said to have been initiated by trees that the hurricane blew down upon the back end of the fellowship hall. The second story's side walls then flipped out, and the hall's then unsupported roof was carried a short distance by the wind. [7]
8. Those missionaries were killed, cooked, and eaten by cannibals in Sumatra, who mistakenly thought the missionaries were their enemies. [11]
9. Sixteen pew sections were removed, namely: four pews on either side of the pulpit [perpendicular to the front wall], the front row of four pews with the partition panels in front of them, and the row of four pews across the back of the church. A total of nearly 10 inches was removed from the pews along the center aisle in order to widen it. [19]
10. It was that women now frequently served as ushers. [7]
11. It was the \$85,000 mortgage for the purchase and subsequent renovation of the Chute house



that was ceremoniously burned. Those renovations were done in 1968, so the house could be used as the church's parsonage. [7]

12. Of the total, \$537 was spent for upholstering and \$515 was spent for installing the tin ceiling. [18]

13. It was voted that at future Communion services, the sermon should be omitted. [5]

14. They hung black widows' shawls on our church and on its pulpit and walls. We know this because Katharine Lee Bates wrote a poem about that, which she entitled *"When Lincoln Died."* [18]

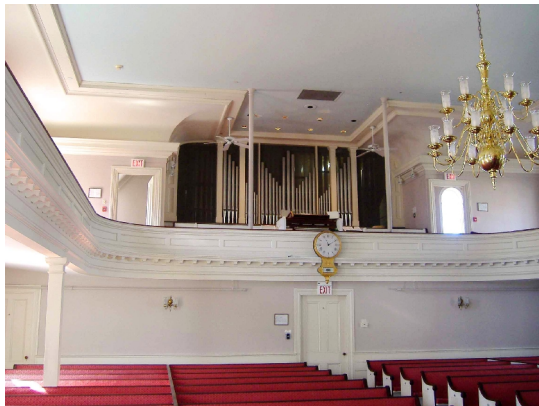
15. The earliest Congregational worship buildings were meeting houses. Though some were nearly square, their pulpit and their front door were located on opposite long walls of the building. This arrangement helped parishioners to hear and see the minister. In contrast, church buildings have their pulpit and front door on opposite short walls. Without amplification, hearing becomes a problem in larger church buildings. [13]



Our church sanctuary

16. They didn't want stained glass windows. The Puritans did not believe that any space, including their meeting houses, was sacred. They de-emphasized the mystical aspects of worship, but they were on the lookout for examples of divine providence working in their lives, even in small things. [13]

17. When meeting houses had benches, men were seated on one side of early meeting houses and women were seated on the other side. A woman's "meeting house side" was the side of her head that the men in the meeting house could see. [13]



Our sanctuary balcony, pipe organ, and chandelier

18. It is the "Old Ship Meeting House" in Hingham, Massachusetts.[13]

19. The ice was broken in the meeting house's baptismal bowl to secure water to baptize newborns. [13]

20. Box pews often had shallow hinged seats on three of their inner sides. Those seats were hooked in an upright position when worshipers stood to sing or pray [as was the custom then]. When the worship

ended, those seats were dropped back down into position, which caused an awful clattering sound throughout the meeting house. [13]

21. Slightly over 10% included the collection of an offering during their worship, according to that survey. At that time, most of those churches were supported by their society or parish, which often secured funds by selling and renting pews and taxing its own members. [23]



A sanctuary window

22. According to the 1648 Cambridge Platform, the Congregational form of church government is mixed. It is a monarchy, as the head of each church is Jesus Christ. It is an aristocracy, as the leadership and guidance of clergy, ruling elders, and deacons are important to it. It is also a democracy, because the direction of the church is decided by its members at church meetings which, in principle, are held to discern Christ's will for the church through the members' discussions and voting.

23. Horse dung was used by Paul Revere, with other materials, to create the mold into which molten metal was poured to create Revere bells. [20]

24. Such "concerts" were prayer meetings for the evangelization of the world. [8]

25. Congregational missionaries were notably unsuccessful in Missouri, which was a slave state then.

26. Willamette University [1842] of Salem, Oregon, and the University of the Pacific [1851] of Stockton, California, were both founded by the Methodists.

27. The word is from the Native American Algonquian dialect in Massachusetts. In that language, mugwump meant "great chief." Rev. John Eliot used that term to convey the idea of "duke" or "centurion" in his translation of the Bible [1661-1663] into Algonquian. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the word meant someone who was a "bigwig." Later, the term was used to describe a politician who either couldn't or wouldn't make up his mind on some important issue or who refused to take a stand when expected to do so.

28. The minister was Lyman Beecher, the father of Henry Ward Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe. [17]

29. The Cherokee Nation and the Choctaw Nation



Our church's Manse  
with widow's walk

### 30. Protestant Communion Services

31. First, at its 1876 and 1878 annual meetings, the General Association of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts recommended that all Congregational churches in the Commonwealth use only the unfermented grape juice at the communion table. That was part of the Association's efforts to encourage Temperance. Accordingly, in 1879 our Falmouth church voted that "unfermented wine be substituted for fermented at the communion." [5]

Second, in 1882, German scientist Robert Koch discovered the microbe that caused tuberculosis, giving support to the idea that diseases are caused by germs.

That move away from wine with its germ-killing qualities and the subsequent discovery of disease-causing germs led most Congregational churches in Massachusetts and elsewhere to begin using small, individual communion cups for sanitary reasons. Prior to that, Congregationalists often used common cups in that sacrament. By 1900 or earlier, our church was using individual, small cups for Holy Communion. [6]

32. The first Sabbath School in Massachusetts was located in the town of Beverly. [10]



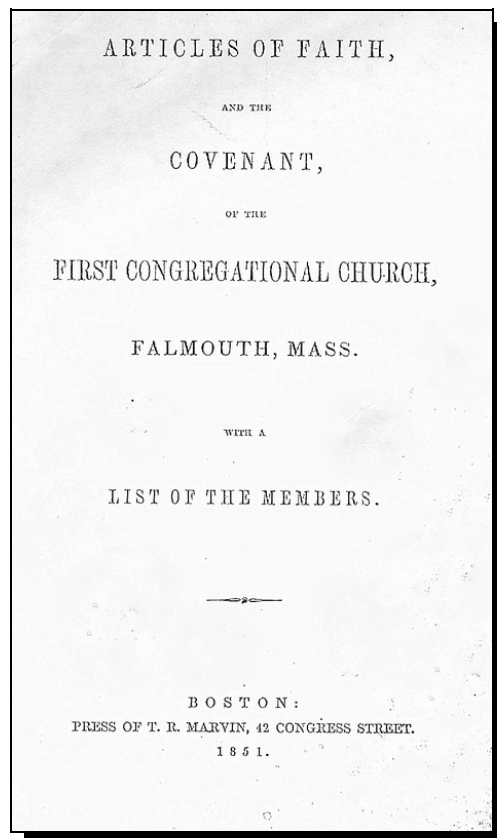
On First Congregational dinner plates

## APPENDIX VI

### Names of Our Church's Members: 1732–1850

In 1851, during Rev. Henry Hooker's ministry, our church published a booklet entitled *Articles of Faith, and the Covenant of the First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Mass. With a List of the Members*. It was common in that period for Congregational churches to publish such booklets. However, I only know of one copy of that Falmouth church booklet. It is in the archives of our church. To make the membership list in that booklet more available for genealogical and other research purposes, I am including images of the pages that contain that list [pages 11–23] in this Appendix.

In using the following information, be aware that adjustments seem to have been made for Old Style dating before 1752 on dates that fall between January 1 and March 25. For example, the list below says that Sarah Gray became a member of our Falmouth church in 1733. However, the actual church record shows her as having joined on February 25, near the end of the year 1732. Today, as in this 1851 list, we would identify that as a 1733 date.



## MEMBERS.

NOTE.—*t* prefixed, signifies that the person was received by transfer from another church; *d* following, signifies dismissal to another church; *ex* denotes excommunication.

Those females who have married since uniting with the church, have their present name enclosed in brackets [ ]. Married females have the first name of their husband in a parenthesis ( ).

Names of living and resident members at this date, 1851, who made profession previous to 1820, are printed in *italics*. After that date, 1820, \* prefixed to a name, signifies decease.

1732.

Cuffee (colored)  
Ebenezer Parker  
Sarah Rowley  
Mary Holmes [Price]  
Hepzibah Nye [Coffin]  
Joseph Chadwick  
Prudence Parker  
Mehitabel Hatch  
Ezekiel Eldridge  
Bethia (Ezekiel) Eldridge  
Benjamin Parker  
Hannah (Benjamin) Parker  
Elizabeth (Matthew) Price

1733.

Sarah Gray [Bartlett] *d*  
Mary (Thomas) Hatch  
Rebecca Hatch [Lewis]  
Mary (Ebenezer) Chipman  
Abia (Simcon) Hatch  
Joseph Crowell  
Hannah (Moses) Mandell  
Elizabeth (Benjamin) Chadwick  
Thankful (Roland) Robinson  
John Hammond  
Elizabeth Ellis [West]

1735.

Jerusha Butler [Davis]

1736.

*t* Jonathan Grew  
*t* Abigail (Jonathan) Grew  
Theophilus Dimmick  
Sarah (Theophilus) Dimmick

1737.

*t* Katharine (Benjamin) Nye  
Experience (Thomas) Parker *d*

1738.

Doreas Fish  
Benjamin Nye, Jr.  
Bathsheba (Joseph) Crowell

1739.

*t* Seth Hathaway  
*t* Damaris (Seth) Hathaway  
Martha (Joseph) Meiggs

1740.

*t* Elizabeth (Benjamin) Nye  
*t* Theodore Morss

1741.

Ruth Robinson [Swift]  
Abigail (Robert) Parker *d*  
John Parker *d*

## 1742.

† Zaccheus Hatch *d*  
 † Mercy (Zaccheus) Hatch *d*  
 † Susanna (Hatch) Eldred *d*  
 Mercy (Rev. Samuel) Palmer  
 Nathaniel Hatch  
 John Price  
 Kczia (John) Price  
 Hannah Robinson  
 Thankful Pitts  
 Susanna Davis  
 Eunice Hatch [Childs]  
 Edward Hatch  
 James Hinckley  
 Benjamin Davis, Jr.  
 Mary (Ichabod) Nye  
 Elizabeth (Seth) Nye  
 Reliance (Lemuel) Davis *d*  
 Thankful Davis [Nye]  
 Mary (Silas) Hatch  
 Mercy Tobey [Blish] *d*  
 Joanna (Robert) Hatch  
 Honor (David) Weeks  
 Dorcas Hatch  
 Elizabeth Dexter [Jenkins]  
 Nathan Lewis, Jr.  
 Ann (Nathan) Lewis  
 Samuel Davis  
 Mary (Nathan) Gifford  
 Abigail Weeks  
 Elizabeth Parker *d*  
 Dinah Davis  
 Jane Hatch [Robinson]  
 Hannah (Ebenzer) Hatch  
 Mehitabel Hatch [Wing]  
 Joseph Parker  
 Rebecca (Joseph) Parker  
 John Tobey  
 Abigail (Elisha) Tobey  
 Silvanus Hatch  
 Paul Hatch  
 Hannah Shiverick  
 Hannah (Joseph) Robinson  
 Thankful (Hatch) Rowley  
 Mary Robinson [Swift]  
 † Jane (Moses) Hatch  
 Hannah (Nathan) Rowley  
 Mehitabel (Jonathan) Col-  
 man *d*  
 Thomas Shiverick  
 Mary (Thomas) Shiverick  
 Nathan Lewis *d*  
 Experience (Nathan) Lewis

Thomas Parker  
 Charles Pope  
 Mary (Benjamin) Nye  
 Sarah Chadwick [Price]  
 Reliance Hatch [Davis]  
 Hatch Rowley  
 Elizabeth (Samuel) Bourne  
 Joseph Childs, Jr. *d*  
 Elizabeth (Roland) Fish  
 Dorcas (James) Hinckley  
 Nathan Hatch  
 Joseph Bourne  
 Nathan Rowley  
 Anna (Ichabod) Johnson  
 † John Hinckley *d*

## 1743.

† Joseph Childs  
 † Patience (Moses) Hatch

## 1744.

Ichabod Johnson  
 Thankful Hatch  
 Mercy (John) Bourne

## 1745.

Hannah (Nathaniel) Davis  
 Benjamin Smith *d*  
 † Sackfield West *d*  
 † Ruth (Sackfield) West *d*  
 Roland Robinson

## 1746.

Jonathan Price  
 † Ruth (Nathaniel) Nickerson  
 † Elisha Tobey

## 1748.

Mercy Hatch  
 Mercy Hatch, 2d.

## 1749.

Mehitabel (Jonathan) Price  
 Anne Robinson [Dillingham] *d*

## 1750.

† Martha (Benjamin) Hatch  
 Samuel Bourne  
 Ruth (James) Chadwick



1751.

Solomon Price  
Lydia Swift

1755.

Sarah (Rev. Samuel) Palmer  
Mary (Solomon) Nye  
Susanna (Samuel) Davis  
Emma (Reuben) Eldred  
Reuben Eldred

1756.

Bethia (Thomas) Jones  
Tamar (Philip) Dexter  
Hannah (Benjamin) Gifford  
Elizabeth (Samuel) Chadwick  
Mercy (William) Parker  
Lydia Rowley [Chadwick]  
Phebe (Reuben) Gifford

1757.

Mercy Bourne [Bassett]  
d Remember Nye

1758.

Samuel West d

1759.

Eleanor (David) Hatch  
Sarah Holmes [Ferry]

1761.

Mary Chadwick  
Anna (Ephraim) Swift  
Sarah (Solomon) Hatch  
Mary (Daniel) Butler  
Abigail (Nathaniel) Phinney  
Jemima Nye  
Prudence (Isaiah) Price  
Joseph Davis

1762.

Sarah (John) Lawrence  
Thankful (Solomon) Davis  
Martha Parker  
Stephen Crowell  
Hannah (Stephen) Crowell  
Lois (Joseph) Handy  
Thankful (David) Dimmick  
Thankful (John) Crowell  
Mary (Joshua) Crowell

2

1763.

Abigail (Silvanus) Hatch

1764.

Jerusha (John) Greene

1765.

Anna (David) Weeks  
Sarah (Ephraim) Swift  
Remember (Christopher) Gifford.  
Zeruiah Dimmick  
Tabitha (Ebenezer) Dimmick  
Mary Pitts  
Lois (Daniel) Grew  
Timothy Crocker

1766.

Elizabeth (Thomas) Palmer  
Thankful (Edward) Hatch  
Joshua Jenkins  
Hannah (Zac.) Lumbart  
Bethia (Silas) Tobey

1767.

Mary (Ebenezer) Swift  
Elizabeth (Nathaniel) Allen

1768.

Mary (Wait) Hatch  
Lemuel Hatch d  
Jonathan Weeks

1769.

Azarelah Morse d  
Fear (Jeduthun) Hammond

1770.

Ebenezer Swift  
Anna (William) Wright

1771.

Lydia (Jabez) Weeks  
Amy (Joseph) Pease  
Rebecca Tobey [Daggett] d  
Fear (Ebenezer) Nye  
Hannah (Joseph) Parker  
Elizabeth (Bradwick) Dillingham.  
Salvina (Silvanus) Hatch  
Betty (David) Allen



Thankful (Zac.) Allen  
 Anna (Paul) Hammond  
 Joseph Dimmock  
 Mary (Joseph) Dimmock  
 Rebecca (Barnabas) Greene  
 Sarah Parker  
 Thankful (Joseph) Palmer  
 Tabitha (Matthew) Price  
 Mary (William) Gifford  
 Bethia (Solomon) Price  
 Tabitha (Timothy) Davis  
 Barnabas Phinney

1772.

Benjamin Phinney *d*  
 Susanna (Benjamin) Phinney *d*  
 Samuel Nye  
 Mary (Phineas) Fish  
 Jabez Davis  
 Susanna Chadwick  
 Job Parker  
 Samuel Hatch  
 Nathan Hatch *d*  
 Drusilla (Nathan) Hatch *d*  
 Olive (Nathaniel) Hatch  
 Nathaniel Hatch

1773.

Samuel Nash *d*  
 Thomas Palmer  
 Sarah Palmer  
 Mercy (James) Jenkins  
 Sarah Parker

1774.

Susanna (Solomon) Swift  
 Mercy Davis

1775.

[Rev. Samuel Palmer died  
 April 13. Mr. Zebulon But-  
 ler ordained October 18.]

*t* Thomas Swift

1778.

[Rev. Zebulon Butler dismiss-  
 ed July 7, 1778.]

1780.

[Rev. Isaiah Mann ordained  
 January 9, 1780.]

Jabez Dimmick  
 Hannah (Nymphas) Price  
 Experience Cochran

1781.

Sarah (Abner) Davis  
*t* Jane Harding  
 Sarah (Samuel) Fish  
 Love (Micah) Robinson  
 Ebenezer Hatch  
 Lurana (Jabez) Meiggs  
*t* Thomas Freeman  
*t* Mrs. (Thomas) Freeman

1782.

Martha (Lemuel) Green  
*t* Sarah (Samuel) Harding  
 Susanna (Timothy) Crocker  
 Kezia (Nathaniel) Backus *d*  
 Lydia Grew  
 Fear (Lot) Dimmick

1783.

Ichabod Nye  
 Hannah (John) Robinson

1784.

Jabez Meiggs  
 Sarah (Freeman) Fish  
 Anna (Silvanus) Hatch  
 Jane Robinson

1785.

Abigail (Barnabas) Hatch

1786.

Abigail Grew  
 Zipporah (Rev. Isaiah) Mann  
 Sylvanus Davis *d*  
 Mrs. (Sylvanus) Davis

1787.

Anna (Elnathan) Nye  
 Hannah (Nathaniel) Childs  
 Joanna (Barnabas) Hammond  
 Ruth Butler  
 Susanna Bradford

1788.

Ruth Meiggs

1789. [Rev. Isaiah Mann died Ap. 20.]	Rhoda Haskell Samuel Harding Lucy (William) Phinney Hannah Phinney <i>d</i> Elizabeth (Lot) Fish Edward Phinney Ruth (Edward) Phinney
1790. [Rev. Henry Lincoln ordained Feb. 3.]	1795. Jedida (Thomas) Robinson Polly Nye Dinah (Shubael) Lawrence Nabby Lewis Elizabeth Sanford Rufus Fish
<i>t</i> Sarah Butler Joseph Davis <i>ex</i> Priscilla (Joseph) Davis <i>ex</i> Anna Hatch Thankful Clarke	1796. <i>Hannah (Rufus) Freeman</i> Martha Hamlin Hannah Jones [Eldred]
1791. Samuel Harding <i>d</i> Love (Samuel) Harding <i>d</i> Bethia Hatch <i>t</i> Prudence Hatch <i>t</i> Rachel Swift Martha (Joseph) Crocker Temperance (Samuel) Palmer Susanna (Rev. Henry) Lincoln <i>t</i> David Lewis <i>t</i> Phebe (David) Lewis <i>t</i> Sarah Crowell	1797. William Hatch
1792. Ephraim Swift Mary Robinson Nathaniel Phinney <i>d</i> <i>Solomon Lawrence</i> Anna Eldred David Crowell John Bourne Persis (John) Bourne	1799. Easton Butler <i>ex</i>
1793. Rebecca Jenkins Eunice Cothran <i>Elizabeth Swift [Weeks]</i> Lucy (Nathan) Nye Rebecca Nye Sally Nye Hannah (Thomas) Fish Jabez Swift Susanna (Peter) Phinney Rebecca (Justus) Rowley Polly Meiggs <i>Rebecca (Thomas) Shiverick</i>	1800. Abishai Tisdale <i>t</i> Mary (Elihu) Nye
1794. Chloe Harding	1801. Lydia (Jabez) Davis Elizabeth Bourne Elizabeth (Joseph) Jenkins Mary Sanford Moses Swift Abigail Hatch Hannah Nye
	1802. Rebecca (Thacher) Lewis
	1803. <i>t</i> Robinson Gifford <i>t</i> Abigail Gifford <i>t</i> Anne (Barney) Merchant <i>Sarah (Nathaniel) Lewis</i> Joseph Hatch Chloe (Elijah) Swift

Edward Hatch  
 Thankful Gorham  
 Abigail (David) Butler  
 Mercy (Levi) Weeks  
 Susanna (Elisha) Swift  
 Susanna (Timothy) Parker  
 Ruth (Moses) Hatch  
 Benjamin Fish *d*  
 Benjamin Hatch *d*  
 Rachel (Benjamin) Hatch *d*  
 Sarah Chadwick *d*  
 Mary (Joseph) Mayhew  
 Prince Fish  
 Love (Prince) Fish  
 Abigail Swift  
 Mercy (Prince) Dimmick  
 Temperance (David) Gifford  
 Mehitable (Jesse) Gifford  
 Martha Morse  
 Marcia Freeman [Lewis]  
 Lucinda (Stephen) Davis  
 Mary Price  
 Matty (William) Swift  
 Sarah Bourne  
 Asenath Phinney *d*  
 Roland Gifford

## 1804.

Hannah (Walter) Davis  
 Mary (Samuel) Eldred  
 Joseph Bourne  
 Sarah Robinson  
 Mary (Elisha) Weeks  
 Consider Hatch *d*  
 Silas Dudley *d*  
 Thankful (Silas) Dudley *d*  
 Martha Wood  
 Moses Hatch  
 Hepsibah Nye (Cannon) *d*  
 Elizabeth (Lemuel) Eldred  
 Thomas Fish  
 Susanna (Thomas) Fish  
 Sylvia (Nathan) Cobb  
 Tryphenia (Moses) Swift  
 Nancy Hatch  
 Jesse Gifford  
 Fear Chadwick *d*  
 Moses Hatch, 2d.  
 Rachel (Moses) Hatch  
 Christina Rowley  
 Mary Rowley  
 Fear (Cornelius) Robinson  
 Meribah (Ebenezer) Gifford

Elisha Weeks  
 William Weeks  
 Mary (William) Weeks  
 Lydia (William) Sherman  
 Obed Butler  
 Susanna (Obed) Butler  
 Hannah (Thomas) Gifford  
 Amy (John) Fish  
 Lot Gifford  
 Olive (Lot) Gifford  
 John Robinson *d*  
 Sarah (Theophilus) Fish  
 Elizabeth (Weston) Jenkins

## 1805.

Elizabeth (Thomas) Jones *ex*  
 Thankful (Zurich) Bourne *ex*  
 Hannah (Benjamin) Parker  
 Zipporah (Benjamin) Fish  
 Olive (Rufus) Fish  
 Polly (Noah) Hatch  
 Susanna (Ezekiel) Snow *d*  
 Thankful (Paul) Weeks  
 William Crowell  
 Braddock Dimmick  
 Celia (Braddock) Dimmick  
 Dorcas Crowell  
 John Swift  
 Susanna (Nathan) Ellis

## 1806.

James Robinson  
 Sabria (James) Robinson  
 Phebe (Silas) Gifford  
 Susanna (Wally) Robinson  
 David Hatch  
 Nancy (David) Hatch  
 Susanna Hatch  
 Martha Handy  
 Sarah Lewis [Dimmick]  
 Sarah Hatch *d*  
 Cynthia Sanford

## 1807.

Micah Sampson  
 Mary (Micah) Sampson  
 Phebe (Solomon) Crowell  
 Rebecca (Sylvanus) Parker  
 Sarah Crowell  
 Peter Robinson *d*  
 Kezia (Peter) Robinson *d*  
 Abigail Pitcher  
 Samuel Jenkins

Rest (Samuel) Jenkins  
 Davis Fish  
 Hannah (Davis) Fish  
 Elizabeth (Isaiah) Chadwick  
 Thomas Davis, Jr.  
 Bathsheba (Joshua) Crowell *d*  
 Mercy (William) Crowell  
 Solomon Swift  
 Lurana (Elijah) Chadwick  
 Lydia Weeks [Landers]  
 Susanna Gifford  
 Hannah Dimmick

## 1808.

Jane Parker [Dimmick]  
 Mary (Timothy) Crocker  
 Zephaniah Robinson  
 Hannah (Zeph.) Robinson  
 Honor (Joseph) Palmer  
 William Eldred  
 Tabitha Sherman [Bourne] *d*  
 Eunice Hatch  
 Abner Davis  
*Love (Anselm) Dimmick*  
 Frederic Parker  
 Rebecca (Frederick) Parker  
 Lemuel Green  
 Barbara (Reuben Burgiss)  
 Abigail Gorham [Raymond]  
 Ward Hatch *ex*  
*Anna (Ward) Hatch*  
 Phebe (Lot) Crowell  
 Jesse Noble *ex*

## 1809.

Silas Weeks *d*  
 Betsy Nye  
 Eli Jenkins *d*  
 Prudence (Silas) Weeks *d*  
 Solomon Crowell  
 Rosana Davis [Swift] *d*  
 Asa Edwards  
 Sarah (Asa) Edwards *d*  
 Benjamin Nye *d*  
 Ebenezer Nye *d*  
 John Nye, Jr. *d*  
 Stephen Nye *d*  
 Shubael Nye *d*  
 Abigail (Shubael) Nye *d*  
 Bethia (Eli) Jenkins *d*  
 Temperance Jenkins [Davis]  
 Rebecca (Samuel) Jenkins *d*

Simcon Harding *d*  
 Crocker Davis  
 Elizabeth (Crocker) Davis  
 Peter Phinney *d*  
 Phebe (Job) Davis  
 Samuel M. Dewey *ex*  
 Mary Price  
*Philip Jenkins*  
 Rachel Jenkins  
 Mary Greene  
 Mary Greene, 2d.  
 Charity Greene [Bearso]  
 Thomas Fish, Sen.  
 Seth Robinson *d*  
 Esther (Seth) Robinson *d*  
 Alvin Nye  
 Isaiah Hatch *d*  
 Sarah (Charles) Robinson  
 Lydia Fuller *d*  
 Jane Robinson [Jenkins]  
 Joshua Davis  
 Anna (Elijah) Bourne  
 Reuben Chadwick  
*Abigail (Thatcher) Lewis*  
 Sophronia Wood [Cathcart]  
 Robinson G. Landers  
*Mercy Weeks [Swift]*  
 Philip Phinney *d*  
 Persis (Philip) Phinney *d*  
*Calvin Childs d*  
 Reliance (Abishai) Phinney *d*  
 Lydia Caswell  
 Mary Bourne  
 David Nye  
 Ebenezer Fuller  
 Sylvanus Hatch *d*  
 Benjamin Parker *d*  
 Charles Jenkins *d*  
 Lucy Smith *d*  
 Jerusha Fuller  
 Susanna Hatch  
*Maria Jenkins [Robinson]*  
*Martha Swift [Nye]*  
 Tabitha Harding [Hatch] *d*  
 Chloe Fish [Childs] *d*  
*Anna Price [Nye]*  
 Hannah Davis  
 Jonathan Phinney *d*  
 Rebecca (Jonathan) Phinney *d*  
 Sabra (Avery) Chadwick *d*  
 Noah Fuller  
 Freeman Fish *d*  
 Tabitha Hatch [Baker]

Lydia Luce  
 Patience (Paul) Price [Swift]  
 Joseph Jenkins  
 Davis Robinson  
 Anna Jenkins  
*Abigail (Alpheus) Childs*  
 Susanna (Daniel) Jenkins *d*  
 Crocker Merchant  
 Mercy Nye  
 Dan Davis  
 Prince Athorn  
 Content (Prince) Athorn  
*John Hatch, Jr.*  
 Sarah (John) Hatch  
 Daniel Jenkins *d*  
 Joseph Bourne, Jr.  
 Lucy (Isaiah) Hatch  
 Betsy (Ebenezer) Hatch  
 Thankful Snow [Brailley]  
 John Davis  
 Susanna (John) Davis  
*Temperance Davis*  
*Lucy Lawrence*  
 Martha Landers  
 Chloë Hamblin  
 Calvin Robinson  
 Francis Weeks  
 Elijah Bourne  
 William Phinney *d*  
 Sarah (Thomas) M'Clean  
 Martha Hatch [Crowell]  
 Stephen Crowell  
 Rebecca (Stephen) Crowell  
*Walter Davis*  
*Sylvia (Abraham) Fish*  
 Betsy Robinson [Reed] *d*  
*Mercy Chadwick [Childs]*  
 Alpheus Childs *ex*  
 George Parker  
 Mary Fish  
 Fear Hatch  
 Sarah Swift  
*Phebe Gifford [Weeks]*  
 Betsy Fish [Lewis]

## 1810.

Ephraim Pierce  
 Warren Fish  
 Davis Fish  
 Abner Jenkins  
*Phebe (Abner) Jenkins*  
 Bathsheba Baxter [Weeks]  
 Zervia (Freeman) Fish

Charles Robinson *d*  
 Sarah Fish *ex*  
 Joseph Robinson *d*  
 Polly (Enos) Nickerson  
 Melinda (John) Swift  
 Joseph Childs  
 Ruth (Joseph) Childs  
 Mary Hinckley  
 Noah Hatch *ex*  
 Reuben Hatch *d*

## 1811.

Temperance Hinckley  
 Aesah (Samuel) Shiverick  
 Jethro Swift *d*  
 Enos Nickerson  
 Mary (Zadoc) Hatch  
 Mehitable (Nathan'l) Bourne *d*  
 Mary (Zenas) Robinson  
 Tabitha Hamblin  
 Anne Lawrence [Greene]  
 Bethia Swift [Davis]  
*Hannah (Joshua) Davis*

## 1812.

Benjamin Eldred  
 Sophia Crocker  
*Thankful Shiverick [Butler]*  
 Samuel Chadwick  
 Sarah Bradford  
 Simcon Eldred *d*  
 Walter Turner *d*  
 Lydia (Walter) Turner *d*  
 David Bradford  
 David Bourne *d*  
 Patty (David) Bourne *d*  
 Hannah (Simcon) Hamlin  
 Eunice (Eliphalet) Hatch  
 Lydia Eldred  
 Mary Small *d*  
 Polly Bradford  
 Antony Small *d*  
 Abner Phinney *d*  
 Olive (Abner) Phinney *d*  
 Asa Phinney *d*  
 Anna (Asa) Phinney  
 Matilda Bourne *d*  
 Nathaniel Nye, Jr.  
 Anna Hatch [Jenkins]  
*Chloë Fish [Lumbart]*  
 Freeman Marchant  
*Prince Jenkins*  
 Nymphas Fish *d*

Lewis W. Callott  
*John Davis, Jr.*  
 Braddock Robinson  
*Delia Weeks*  
 Mercy Davis [Robinson]  
 Thankful Davis [Gorham] *d*  
*Mary Hatch*  
*Cynthia (David) Lewis*  
*Celia Fish [Cornish]*  
*Susan E. Fish [Jenkins]*  
 Lydia Hamblin  
 Dinah Handy

1813.

Melinda Bourne [Childs] *d*  
 William Sanford  
*Kezia C. Sanford*  
*t* Peter Crocker  
 Simcon Eldred

1814.

Sophia Eldridge *d*  
 Abraham Swift  
 Olive (Abraham) Swift

1815.

Emanuel Prady  
*William Lawrence*  
*Braddock Gifford*  
 Hannah (William) Lawrence  
 Keziah Shiverick

1816.

*Thankful (Isaac) Robinson*

1819.

Solomon Hamblin  
*Francis Nye*  
 Prince Dimnick  
*Joseph Robinson*  
 Love Phinney [Swift] *d*  
 Mary (Eli) Jenkins  
 Lydia Jenkins *d*  
 Hannah Jenkins *d*  
 Martha Bourne [Swift]  
 Rest Shiverick  
*Lydia Robinson [Davis]*

1820.

Eunice Gifford [Robinson] *d*  
 Solomon Lawrence, 2d. *d*

Mary (Solomon) Lawrence *d*  
 Charles Weeks  
 Nathaniel Shiverick *d*  
 Abishai Greene *d*  
 David Eldred *d*  
 Meltiah Lawrence  
*t* Phebe (Francis) Nye  
*Samuel Nye*  
*Elizabeth (Coman) Hatch*  
 Hannah Snow  
 Leah Virginia (colored)

[Hereafter a star (\*) prefixed to  
 a name signifies decease.]

[Rev. Henry Lincoln dismissed  
 Nov. 26, 1823.]  
 [Mr Benjamin Woodbury or-  
 dained June 7, 1824.]

1824.

Charles Chase *d*

1825.

Phebe (Joseph) Hatch  
 \*Elizabeth (Joseph) Shiverick  
 Rachel (Ephraim) Dexter

1826.

Charles W. Jenkins *d*  
*t* Mary (Ephraim) Eldred  
*t* Elizabeth Eldred  
*t* Benjamin Greene  
*t* Anna (Benjamin) Greene  
 \*Ephraim Swift  
 Martha Crocker  
 Hetty Jenkins

1827.

Marshall (Nathaniel) Eldred  
*t* Harriet (David) Butler  
 Mary Mayhew *d*  
 Mary Stewart [Nye]  
*t* Abigail Landers *d*  
 Isaac Swift *d*

1828.

\*Thatcher Lewis  
 Elihu Hatch  
 Mary (Elihu) Hatch  
 \*Sally Sanford  
 Sarah H. Shiverick

Susan (Thomas) Swift  
 † Thomas Swift  
 \* Roswell Hatch  
 \* Elizabeth (Roswell) Hatch  
 Thatcher L. Hatch  
 Thomas Robinson *d*  
 \* Caroline Swift [Davis]  
 Thankful Swift [Hatch]  
 \* Mary Shiverick  
 Mehitable (Rev. B.) Wood-  
 bury *d*  
 Tabitha Robinson [Greene]  
 \* Love (Eleazer) Grew  
 Fanny Robinson [Merriam] *d*  
 Rebecca Dimmick [Swift] *d*  
 Eliza Childs [Hussey]  
 William Eldred  
 \* Deborah (William) Eldred  
 Patience (Wm. 2d) Eldred *d*  
 Caroline Crocker *d*  
 Mary Dimmick [Robinson] *d*  
 Hannah S. Dexter [Dexter]  
 Francis Hatch [Crowell]  
 \* Elizabeth Eldred [Tobey]  
 \* Timothy Crocker  
 Ephraim Lawrence  
 Mary (Ephraim) Lawrence  
 \* Shadrach Lawrence  
 Lot C. Fish  
 Nancy (Meltiah) Lawrence  
 Hannah Chadwick  
 \* Rhoda Crocker  
 Olive Waterman *d*  
 Mary Jenkins [Lawrence]  
 Martha Jenkins [Mitchell]  
 Eunice Green [Lawrence]  
 Ann M. Derigo  
 \* Harriett (John) Jenkins  
 \* Mary (Solomon) Lawrence  
 Sarah (Easton) Butler  
 Susan D. Robinson [Dimmick]  
 Mary (Braddock) Gifford  
 Sarah N. Lawrence [Chadwick]  
 Malora Lawrence [Crosby] *d*  
 Susan (Harrison) Goodspeed  
 \* Joseph Shiverick  
 † Jeremiah Pease

1829.

\* Ephraim Eldred *ex*  
 \* Isaac Robinson  
 Abigail H. Robinson [Bears]

\* Mahala (Ezekiel) Swift  
 Rebecca Davis  
 \* Betsy (Clark) Cornish  
 Mary (James C.) Gifford  
 Abigail Swift  
 Abigail Nye [Crowell] *d*  
 Dorcas Swift

1830.

Aphia Crowell [Tobey] *d*  
 \* Keziah (Joseph) Lawrence  
 Timothy Nye  
 Betsy (Timothy) Nye  
 Paul Nye  
 Sally (Paul) Nye  
 Elijah Robinson  
 Samuel B. Mayhew *d*  
 \* William Eldred, 2d.  
 Frederic Davis  
 Julia A. Hatch *d*  
 \* Mary Shiverick [Gibbs]  
 \* Harriett F. Jenkins [Norton]

1831.

\* Caroline Wilcox  
 Rebecca Shiverick

1832.

Braddock G. Jenkins  
 \* Thatcher Robinson  
 Foster Robinson  
 \* Celia F. Hatch [Jenkins]  
 Chloe (Lot) Fish  
 Daniel S. Lewis *d*  
 Nathaniel Eldred  
 John Butler  
 Christopher Dyer *d*  
 Susan (Christopher) Dyer *d*  
 Susan Lawrence  
 Sally (Davis) Hatch  
 \* Susan (Stephen) Davis  
 Acsah Dexter [Dexter]  
 Joseph L. Swift *d*  
 \* William H. Swift  
 \* Weston Jenkins

1833.

Eunice R. Jenkins [Lewis]  
 [Rev. Benj. Woodbury dis-  
 missed Sept. 19.]



1834.

[Rev. Josiah Bent ins. Feb. 5.]

† \*John Swift  
 † \*Abishai Green  
 † \*Nathaniel Shiverick  
 † Salome (Nathaniel) Shiverick  
 Luther W. Sherman *d*

1835.

† Paulina (Rev. J.) Bent *d*  
 † Catharine Dyer *d*  
 † \*Sally D. Bodfish  
 Mary D. Sherman *d*  
 Susan Damon *d*  
 Aaron Cornish  
 Nancy (Simcon) Hamblin  
 † Love (Ezekiel) Swift  
 Nathaniel Nottage *d*  
 \*Nathaniel Nye  
 Baalis B. Shiverick  
 James M. Swift *d*  
 Watson S. Butler  
 Henry Butler  
 Andrew Croswell *d*  
 \*Charles C Sanford  
 Henry M. Lewis *d*  
 Henry Robinson  
 Benjamin W. Swift  
 Mary (S. P.) Croswell  
 Lucy S. (Frederick) Davis  
 Mary (Francis) Fish  
 \*Catharine (Silas) Davis  
 Hannah Swift  
 Ann L. Fish  
 Rhoda R. Fish [Fish]  
 Betsy L. Fish [Sanford]  
 Elizabeth Green [Perry] *d*  
 \*Susan Robinson [Nye]  
 Ruth Fish  
 Adaline Lawrence [Jenkins]  
 Julia A Lawrence [Gifford]  
 Jane E. Chadwick [Robinson]  
 Sophronia Lawrence [Newcomb] *d*  
 Rhoda R. Swift [Hatch]  
 Lydia Bearse *d*  
 \*Ann L. Shiverick [Mitchell]  
 Harriett P. Croswell [Caldwell] *d*  
 Sarah P. Croswell [Cressy] *d*  
 Cornelia M. Lawrence [Lewis]

Elizabeth F. Lewis [Rogers]  
 Susan Thompson  
 † Charles W. Jenkins *d*  
 † Phebe (Charles W.) Jenkins *d*  
 Otis Fish *d*  
 Ruth (Joseph) Robinson  
 Phebe Gifford *d*  
 Charlotte Burr *d*  
 Lucy Bourne *d*  
 Benjamin R. Gifford *d*  
 \*Stephen Swift

1836.

Easton Butler  
 Moses Robinson  
 Susan (Moses) Robinson  
 † Jane (Thomas) Fish  
 † Lucy (Joseph) Davis  
 Alden B. Landers *ex*  
 William Weeks  
 Temperance Potter  
 Eliza A. Potter [Nye] *d*  
 \*Roxana (Marcus) Weeks  
 Eunice G. Weeks [Tobey] *d*  
 \*Elijah Chadwick

1837.

[Rev. Josiah Bent dis. Feb. 22.]  
 [Rev. Henry B. Hooker installed Feb. 22.]

† Martha V. (H. B.) Hooker

1838.

† Alice (Isaac) Bourne  
 John Jenkins  
 Eliza (O. C.) Swift  
 Harriet Jones [Burrill]  
 Marianne (Wm. G.) Pease  
 Elizabeth Stewart [Bourne]  
 Mary Phinney [Bears]  
 Hiram Nye *d*  
 Samuel P. Croswell

1839.

† Maria (William) Swift  
 Abigail (William) Shiverick  
 Louisa (Charles) Bourne *d*  
 Betsy (G. W.) Weeks  
 \*Edmund Davis  
 Lucy (Edmund) Davis  
 Love (Jabez) Davis

Martha Sanford [Hawley] *d*  
 Hannah F. Eldred [Hatch] *d*  
 Lorenzo Eldred  
 Edwin Eldred *d*  
 \*Jabez Swift

## 1840.

Jabez Davis, Jr.  
 \*Ann (Francis) Allen  
 Cynthia (Thomas) Lewis  
 Mary (Braddock) Dimmick

## 1841.

Thomas D. Gifford  
 Edmund Lambert  
 Hervey Weeks  
 Sophia (Otis) Fish *d*  
 Harriett Fish [Jones]  
 \*Mary Ann Lawrence  
 \*Mary [Jabez] Swift  
 Love P. Dimmick  
 Rebecca C. Greene [Gifford]  
 Mary (Abishai) Green  
 Harriet H. Butler [Gifford]  
 Lucy F. Swift [Swift] *d*  
 Julia Connor [Robinson]  
 † \*Thomas Robinson  
 † Mary (Thomas) Robinson

## 1842.

† Mary (Samuel) Davis  
 George W. Weeks  
 Charles Dimmick  
 Thomas Lewis  
 Freeman Hinekley *d*  
 Gilbert R. Tobey  
 Joseph C. Fish  
 Celia (Watson) Shiverick  
 Elizabeth (Davis) Robinson  
 Susan M. Swift [Price]  
 \*Mary M. Swift [Stetson]  
 † Chloe (John) Jenkins  
 † Nancy (Zephaniah) Robinson  
 Elijah Chadwick, Jr.  
 John Foster Jenkins *d*  
 Rebecca S. Lawrence  
 Rebecca Parker [Pettingell] *d*  
 Harriet L. Bourne *d*  
 Caroline E. Shiverick [Good-  
 speed]  
 \*Lucy (Heman) Hatch  
 Mary (Joseph) Hatch

Susan P. Butler  
 Martha L. Butler  
 Sarah (Leonard) Dexter  
 † Asenath Phinney

## 1843.

James M. Lewis  
 Solomon D. Robinson  
 Owen Eldridge  
 Mercy (Owen) Eldridge  
 Mary (Ephraim) Eldridge  
 Cornelia M. Swift [Gould]  
 Celia Weeks  
 Cynthia Lewis [Swift]  
 \*Lot C. Chadwick  
 Fanny (Charles) Dimmick  
 Charles Lawrence  
 Henry Lawrence  
 James C. Gifford  
 Christopher Gifford  
 \*Nathaniel N. Gifford  
 Sarah B. Hooker  
 Annie E. Hooker  
 John Dimmick  
 Lydia (John) Dimmick  
 Freeman B. Lewis  
 John P. Robinson  
 Love Chadwick  
 Isabella Gifford *d*

## 1844.

George A. Lawrence  
 Olive (Henry) Fish *d*  
 Susan Davis [Herendeen]  
 Phebe A. Jenkins  
 Eliza J. Lawrence

## 1845.

Mary E. Butler [Morrison]  
 Mary J. Drew  
 Mary A. Eldred

## 1846.

† Mercy (Lorenzo) Eldred  
 Alice (Micajah) Fisher  
 † Gideon C. Gifford  
 † Patience (William) Eldred  
 † Harriett (Silas) Jones  
 † Elizabeth (Obad) Goodspeed

## 1847.

Helen M. Bourne [Nye]

Elizabeth Drew Robinson  
Elizabeth W. Swift [Marston]  
Adeline C. Swift  
Harriet S. Jenkins.

1848.

† Alexander Swift  
† Harriet (Alexander) Swift  
\* Martha (Christopher) Bearse  
† Moses Rogers

1849.

Elijah Swift  
Elizabeth D. F. Cornish  
Stephen C. Dillingham  
John Cotton Parker  
Adeline (H. C.) Bunker  
Dorcas (Lemuel) Eldridge  
Susan M. Davis  
Celia (S. P.) Bourne

Maria Withington  
Mary Abby Webster  
Sabra (Francis) Davis  
Hannah (William) Davis  
Sarah R. Bates  
Tabitha Robinson

1850.

Adelaide Gifford  
Eliza (J. R.) Dillingham  
Sarah (Augustus) Lawrence  
Chloe H. Robinson  
Hannah R. Davis  
Ellen R. Chadwick  
Celia M. Bourne  
Joan (L. C.) Swift  
Jane (James M.) Lewis  
Celia (Lewis) Robinson  
Susan Swift  
Ruth L. Eldridge

## SUMMARY.

The whole number of persons, who have been received into the church during the period of one hundred and nineteen years, is one thousand. The admissions, at different periods, are as follows :

During Mr. Palmer's ministry, 43 years, 4 months, . . .	227
Interval, . . . . . 6 months.	
During Mr. Butler's ministry, 2 years, 9 months, . . .	1
Interval, . . . . . 1 year, 6 months.	
During Mr. Mann's ministry, 9 years, 3 months, . . .	34
Interval, . . . . . 9 months.	
During Mr. Lincoln's ministry, 33 years, 10 months, . . .	420
Interval, . . . . . 6 months.	
During Mr. Woodbury's ministry, 9 years, 3 months, . . .	112
Interval, . . . . . 5 months.	
During Mr. Bent's ministry, 3 years, . . . . .	68
Since Mr. Hooker's settlement, 14 years, . . . . .	138
Total, . . . . .	1,000

The present number, February 22, 1851, is 237 ; of whom 67 are males, and 170 females.

## APPENDIX VII

### Names of Our Pastors and Deacons to 1850

Our church's 1851 booklet, *Articles of Faith, and the Covenant of the First Congregational Church, Falmouth, Mass. With a List of the Members*, noted in Appendix VI, also contained a list of our church's clergy and deacons to that point in time, which I include here.

Jonathan Dunham's ministry in our community, 1677 or 1679 to 1684, apparently was forgotten by 1851 because his name does not appear in the following list or in the brief description of our church's history, which appears in this booklet. In contrast, this booklet's historical section does refer to Samuel Shiverick serving as a minister and preaching in our community. However, the compilers of this booklet did not include him in the list of our church's clergy below, perhaps because Shiverick served our community before our church was gathered in 1708. Note that there are discrepancies in some dates given below for Rev. Josiah Marshall,<sup>1</sup> Rev. Isaiah Mann,<sup>2</sup> Rev. Benjamin Woodbury,<sup>3</sup> and Rev. Josiah Bent.<sup>4</sup>

#### PASTORS.

Rev. JOSEPH METCALF, chosen minister of the town, May 19, 1707, died May 24, 1723.  
 Mr. JOSIAH MARSHALL, ord. Feb. 26, 1724, dismissed June 30, 1730.  
 Mr. SAMUEL PALMER, ord. Nov. 24, 1731, died April 13, 1775.  
 Mr. ZEBULON BUTLER, ord. Oct. 18, 1775, dismissed July 7, 1778.  
 Mr. ISAIAH MANN, ord. January 9, 1780, died April 20, 1789.  
 Mr. HENRY LINCOLN, ord. February 3, 1790, dismissed Nov. 26, 1823.  
 Mr. BENJAMIN WOODBURY, ord. June 9, 1824, dismissed Sept. 9, 1833.  
 Rev. JOSIAH BENT, installed Feb. 5, 1834, dismissed Feb. 22, 1837.  
 Rev. HENRY B. HOOKER, installed February 22, 1837.

In the first centuries of American Congregationalism, deacons were always males, and often they were ordained and served for life or until they resigned. That appears to have been the usual practice in our church until our church was incorporated in 1936. At that point, the new by-laws of our incorporated church called for four deacons who served four year terms and two deaconesses who served two year terms.<sup>5</sup>

In 1961, new by-laws of our church expanded that number to six deacons and four deaconesses.<sup>6</sup> In 1966, by-law changes called for there to be a Board of Deacons made up of six deacons and four deaconesses.<sup>7</sup> In a by-law change in 1971, our church's Board of Deacons was renamed the Diaconate Board.<sup>8</sup> The office of deaconess was dropped from our church's bylaws in 1989, at which point both females and males began to be referred to as deacons.<sup>9</sup> In our present day our deacons serve three year terms.

## DEACONS.

MOSES HATCH, no record of ordination or decease.  
 AARON ROWLEY, ordained June 6, 1734, no record of decease.  
 JOSEPH CROWELL, ordained June 25, 1741, " " "  
 THOMAS PARKER, ordained March, 6, 1745, " " "  
 BENJAMIN PARKER, ordained July 24, 1751, " " "  
 JOSEPH DAVIS, ordained May 16, 1771, died Feb. 13, 1819.  
 TIMOTHY CROCKER, ordained June 24, 1772, no record of decease.  
 SOLOMON PRICE, ordained September 16, 1772, died February 14, 1794.  
 JOB PARKER, ordained June 14, 1786, died May 7, 1812.  
 BENJAMIN HATCH, ordained October 17, 1804, removed to E. Falmouth.  
 BRADDOCK DIMMICK, ordained July 24, 1810, died April 30, 1845.  
 SOLOMON LAWRENCE, ordained November 17, 1824.  
 THOMAS FISH, ordained November 17, 1824, died September 24, 1848.  
 PRINCE JENKINS, ordained February 25, 1836.  
 ISAAC SWIFT, ordained February 25, 1836, removed to Geneva, N. Y.  
 THOMAS ROBINSON, ordained September 2, 1849, died May, 1850.  
 MOSES ROGERS, ordained September 2, 1849.

## ENDNOTES

1. The *Boston News-Letter*, August 27, 1724, indicates that Rev. Marshall was ordained on August 19, 1724.
2. *FCC1*, December 9, 1779 meeting, 97–99; January 19, 1780 adjourned meeting for Ordination, 99–100. Church records indicate that Rev. Mann was ordained on January 19, not January 9.
3. *FCC2*, September 19, 1833, Ecclesiastical Council, 182–184. Church records indicate that the Ecclesiastical Council meeting that advised our church and Rev. Woodbury to dissolve their relationship was held on September 19, not September 9. Their relationship was dissolved soon after that meeting.
4. *FCC3*, February 21, 1837, Ecclesiastical Council, 105–106. Church records indicate that the Ecclesiastical Council meeting that approved the dissolution of the relationship between Rev. Bent and our church met on February 21, 1837. *FCC3*, February 22, 1837, Ecclesiastical Council, 106. The February 21 Ecclesiastical Council adjourned to the next day, at which time it installed Rev. Hooker into our church's pastorate.
5. First Congregational Church By-laws adopted January 14, 1936.
6. First Congregational Church By-laws amended January 19, 1961.
7. First Congregational Church By-laws adopted December 8, 1966.
8. First Congregational Church By-laws revised November 28, 1971.
9. First Congregational Church By-laws revised June 14, 1989.

## APPENDIX VIII

Pew Charts and Owner Lists: 1756 – Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

## Our Third Meeting House: 1752

The record of the Falmouth town meeting of June 21, 1756, listed all the pew owners in its new meeting house.<sup>(1)</sup> It listed twenty-two numbered pews on the main floor and eleven in the gallery.<sup>2</sup> That 1752 meeting house is said to have had galleries along three sides.

At a Town Meeting Legally warned & held at Falmouth  
June the 21<sup>st</sup> 1756 it was voted That all the Pews in the meet-  
ing House should be Recorded to have several owners as they are  
Numbered That is to say in the first place the Pews on the  
Floor  
No. 1 to be for the Minister yours for the Time being  
No. 2 to Capt. Thomas Shiversick  
No. 3 to William ~~Storrs~~ Storrs  
4 to Mr. Joseph Baur  
5 to Mr. Ebenezer Hatch junr  
6 to Mr. Nathaniel Nickerson  
7 to Lieut. Samuel Shiversick  
8 to Capt. Robinson & Ebenezer Dimock  
9 to Mr. Solomon Swift & Solomon Nye  
10 to Mr. Joseph Dexter & Levi Butler  
11 to Mr. Silas Hatch  
12 to Mr. Paul Hatch & Solomon Davis  
13 to Mr. Shubel Weeks  
14 to Mr. Silvanus Parker  
15 to Mr. Joshua Crockett & David Poel  
16 to Mr. Benjamin Parker  
17 to Ensign Theodor Morse  
18 to Capt. Joseph Parker  
19 to Mr. Noah Davis  
20 to Mr. Ephraim Sw. & Shubel Nye  
21 to Roland Robinson Esqr  
22 to Mr. Thomas Parker  
and the Pews in the Gallery as follows: That  
No. 1 to Stephen Crowel  
2 to James Davis  
3 to Mr. Reuben Gifford  
4 to Mr. Solomon Price  
5 to Mr. John Crowel  
6 to Mr. Ebenezer Weeks  
7 to Mr. Benjamin Davis  
8 to Mr. Silas Hatch  
9 to Mr. John Hammon  
10 to the Widow Mary Baur  
11 to Mr. Silvanus Hatch

Pew owners, June 21, 1756 Falmouth Town Meeting record



## Our Congregation's First Church Style Building: 1796

The next two images are pew charts of our 1796 church, apparently made not long before our church was removed from Falmouth's Village Green and rebuilt across the street in 1857.<sup>(3)</sup> The chart below shows the box pews on the church's main floor. On each pew, the light, penciled-in number indicates the pew's number and the location of its door. Marked within each pew is its appraised value, the owner's initials, and "Pd." The last mark indicates that our Congregational Society compensated that pew owner for their pew's appraised value. The new pews our society added to our rebuilt church in 1857 were all slip pews. They hold more people than typical box pews of that time. This chart indicates that stoves were then located in the back corner sections of this main floor.

Chart (about 1857) of the box pews on the church's main floor  
 Courtesy of Falmouth Historical Society



The second of these two charts shows the gallery of the 1796 church. That gallery had both box and slip pews. Also, the back of that gallery was reserved for singers, and near each back corner there were two slip pews that were designated as free pews.<sup>(4)</sup>

Singers

27	28	29	30	31	32
33	34	35	36	37	38
39	40	41	42	43	44
45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56
57	58	59	60	61	62
63	64	65	66	67	68
69	70	71	72	73	74
75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86
87	88	89	90	91	92
93	94	95	96	97	98
99	100	101	102	103	104
105	106	107	108	109	110
111	112	113	114	115	116
117	118	119	120	121	122
123	124	125	126	127	128
129	130	131	132	133	134
135	136	137	138	139	140
141	142	143	144	145	146
147	148	149	150	151	152
153	154	155	156	157	158
159	160	161	162	163	164
165	166	167	168	169	170
171	172	173	174	175	176
177	178	179	180	181	182
183	184	185	186	187	188
189	190	191	192	193	194
195	196	197	198	199	200
201	202	203	204	205	206
207	208	209	210	211	212
213	214	215	216	217	218
219	220	221	222	223	224
225	226	227	228	229	230
231	232	233	234	235	236
237	238	239	240	241	242
243	244	245	246	247	248
249	250	251	252	253	254
255	256	257	258	259	260
261	262	263	264	265	266
267	268	269	270	271	272
273	274	275	276	277	278
279	280	281	282	283	284
285	286	287	288	289	290
291	292	293	294	295	296
297	298	299	300	301	302
303	304	305	306	307	308
309	310	311	312	313	314
315	316	317	318	319	320
321	322	323	324	325	326
327	328	329	330	331	332
333	334	335	336	337	338
339	340	341	342	343	344
345	346	347	348	349	350
351	352	353	354	355	356
357	358	359	360	361	362
363	364	365	366	367	368
369	370	371	372	373	374
375	376	377	378	379	380
381	382	383	384	385	386
387	388	389	390	391	392
393	394	395	396	397	398
399	400	401	402	403	404
405	406	407	408	409	410
411	412	413	414	415	416
417	418	419	420	421	422
423	424	425	426	427	428
429	430	431	432	433	434
435	436	437	438	439	440
441	442	443	444	445	446
447	448	449	450	451	452
453	454	455	456	457	458
459	460	461	462	463	464
465	466	467	468	469	470
471	472	473	474	475	476
477	478	479	480	481	482
483	484	485	486	487	488
489	490	491	492	493	494
495	496	497	498	499	500
501	502	503	504	505	506
507	508	509	510	511	512
513	514	515	516	517	518
519	520	521	522	523	524
525	526	527	528	529	530
531	532	533	534	535	536
537	538	539	540	541	542
543	544	545	546	547	548
549	550	551	552	553	554
555	556	557	558	559	560
561	562	563	564	565	566
567	568	569	570	571	572
573	574	575	576	577	578
579	580	581	582	583	584
585	586	587	588	589	590
591	592	593	594	595	596
597	598	599	600	601	602
603	604	605	606	607	608
609	610	611	612	613	614
615	616	617	618	619	620
621	622	623	624	625	626
627	628	629	630	631	632
633	634	635	636	637	638
639	640	641	642	643	644
645	646	647	648	649	650
651	652	653	654	655	656
657	658	659	660	661	662
663	664	665	666	667	668
669	670	671	672	673	674
675	676	677	678	679	680
681	682	683	684	685	686
687	688	689	690	691	692
693	694	695	696	697	698
699	700	701	702	703	704
705	706	707	708	709	710
711	712	713	714	715	716
717	718	719	720	721	722
723	724	725	726	727	728
729	730	731	732	733	734
735	736	737	738	739	740
741	742	743	744	745	746
747	748	749	750	751	752
753	754	755	756	757	758
759	760	761	762	763	764
765	766	767	768	769	770
771	772	773	774	775	776
777	778	779	780	781	782
783	784	785	786	787	788
789	790	791	792	793	794
795	796	797	798	799	800
801	802	803	804	805	806
807	808	809	810	811	812
813	814	815	816	817	818
819	820	821	822	823	824
825	826	827	828	829	830
831	832	833	834	835	836
837	838	839	840	841	842
843	844	845	846	847	848
849	850	851	852	853	854
855	856	857	858	859	860
861	862	863	864	865	866
867	868	869	870	871	872
873	874	875	876	877	878
879	880	881	882	883	884
885	886	887	888	889	890
891	892	893	894	895	896
897	898	899	900	901	902
903	904	905	906	907	908
909	910	911	912	913	914
915	916	917	918	919	920
921	922	923	924	925	926
927	928	929	930	931	932
933	934	935	936	937	938
939	940	941	942	943	944
945	946	947	948	949	950
951	952	953	954	955	956
957	958	959	960	961	962
963	964	965	966	967	968
969	970	971	972	973	974
975	976	977	978	979	980
981	982	983	984	985	986
987	988	989	990	991	992
993	994	995	996	997	998
999	1000	1001	1002	1003	1004
1005	1006	1007	1008	1009	1010
1011	1012	1013	1014	1015	1016
1017	1018	1019	1020	1021	1022
1023	1024	1025	1026	1027	1028
1029	1030	1031	1032	1033	1034
1035	1036	1037	1038	1039	1040
1041	1042	1043	1044	1045	1046
1047	1048	1049	1050	1051	1052
1053	1054	1055	1056	1057	1058
1059	1060	1061	1062	1063	1064
1065	1066	1067	1068	1069	1070
1071	1072	1073	1074	1075	1076
1077	1078	1079	1080	1081	1082
1083	1084	1085	1086	1087	1088
1089	1090	1091	1092	1093	1094
1095	1096	1097	1098	1099	1100
1101	1102	1103	1104	1105	1106
1107	1108	1109	1110	1111	1112
1113	1114	1115	1116	1117	1118
1119	1120	1121	1122	1123	1124
1125	1126	1127	1128	1129	1130
1131	1132	1133	1134	1135	1136
1137	1138	1139	1140	1141	1142
1143	1144	1145	1146	1147	1148
1149	1150	1151	1152	1153	1154
1155	1156	1157	1158	1159	1160
1161	1162	1163	1164	1165	1166
1167	1168	1169	1170	1171	1172
1173	1174	1175	1176	1177	1178
1179	1180	1181	1182	1183	1184
1185	1186	1187	1188	1189	1190
1191	1192	1193	1194	1195	1196
1197	1198	1199	1200	1201	1202
1203	1204	1205	1206	1207	1208
1209	1210	1211	1212	1213	1214
1215	1216	1217	1218	1219	1220
1221	1222	1223	1224	1225	1226
1227	1228	1229	1230	1231	1232
1233	1234	1235	1236	1237	1238
1239	1240	1241	1242	1243	1244
1245	1246	1247	1248	1249	1250
1251	1252	1253	1254	1255	1256
1257	1258	1259	1260	1261	1262
1263	1264	1265	1266	1267	1268
1269	1270	1271	1272	1273	1274
1275	1276	1277	1278	1279	1280
1281	1282	1283	1284	1285	1286
1287	1288	1289	1290	1291	1292
1293	1294	1295	1296	1297	1298
1299	1300	1301	1302	1303	1304
1305	1306	1307	1308	1309	1310
1311	1312	1313	1314	1315	1316
1317	1318	1319	1320		



Names			Names		
	No.	Am't		No.	Am't
John Butler	72	16	Elihu Hatch	71	8
E. Gould	13	8	John Dimonick	30	8
Samuel Swift C. G.	2	10	Isabel Davis	33	13
1895	41	17	Samuel P. Davis	20	2 1/4
22 X.	14	7	J. H. Starbuck	22	1 1/2
P. C. Swift	18	8	Joseph L. Fish	3	3 1/4
S. - 1/2	7	1 1/2	Thomas Fish	3	3 1/4
William L. J. Jr	27	13	W. L. Fish	3	3 1/4
Deac. J. Lawrence	38	14	Isaac L. Fish	19	3
Re. Davis Hotel	76	13	George H. Lawrence	42	10
ditto	2	3	Walter Davis	75	13
Isaac Brown	39	9	Chas. per Green	28	1 1/2
Re. Wm. Samson	4	1 1/2	Rosetta C. Gifford	31	4 1/2
do	17	3	Andrew J. Gifford	43	5 1/2
Henry Lawrence	4	1 1/2	Thomas R. Nye	41	2 1/2
Henry Lawrence	41	5	Benjamin C. Gifford	42	8 1/2
50	17		W. L. Fish	32	1 1/2
Olin A. Swift	79	9	Owen Eldridge	43	5 1/2
(S)	21	1 1/2	Owen Eldridge	5	2 1/2
78	9		Edmund Palmer	31	1 1/2
Nancy Hamilton	78	9	J. Robinson Song	10	5
L. Butler	73	14			
Charles C. Nye	77	11			
John F. Nye	77	11			
John F. Nye	77	11			
Per Sale, Shinn	31	4 1/2			
J. C. Lincoln by S.P.	35	14			
Ed. M. Samson do	11	5			
		239 50			112 16

Courtesy of Falmouth Historical Society





Slips in the Gallery		
No. 21	G. C. Swift	\$1.50 P.S.
22	E. Davis	1.50 P.S.
23	J. Lewis Jr.	1.50 P.S.
24	G. A. Lanning	7.50 P.S.
25	B. Dominick	1.50 P.S.
26	Stephen Davis	1.50 P.S.
27	Society	1.50 P.S.
28	Eleazar Green	1.50 P.S.
29	A. Cornish	1.50 P.S.
30	Thos. Swift	1.50 P.S.
31	William Robinson	1.50 P.S.
32	Mar. L. Fitch	1.50 P.S.

Gallery slip pew owners compensated for their pews by 1857

Courtesy of Falmouth Historical Society

### Our First Church Building Moved, Rebuilt, Remodeled: 1857

When our church was moved from the Village Green and remodeled, the builder's specifications for the new pews to be built in it were as follows:<sup>7</sup>

*Slips. For the manner of seating the church see plan – The slips or pews to have mahogany arms with scroll ends, also the capping to backs and book racks to be made of mahogany, all pews fitted with hat racks under the seats, the pews or slips to have no doors, the edges of the panel work at the end of the slips, to be lined with mahogany, also the top edge of ceiling on the walls at the height of the pews to be a strip of mahogany—composition numbers to be put on the pews. –*

The plan mentioned in that quotation may be the diagram on the next page.<sup>(8)</sup> That diagram shows the layout of the main floor of the church in 1857, when it was rebuilt with an extended pulpit area and seventy slip pews. That diagram also shows a stairway at the church's entrance, stairways up to the galleries, the appraised value of each pew, and the initials of those pew owners. That list of pew owners is not exactly the same as the list of owners formally entered in the Congregational Society's record book on April 1, 1861 (shown later in this chapter). That difference leads me to think that the owner list on the next page likely was made before that 1861 list and before some changes were made in the ownership of those pews.<sup>9</sup>



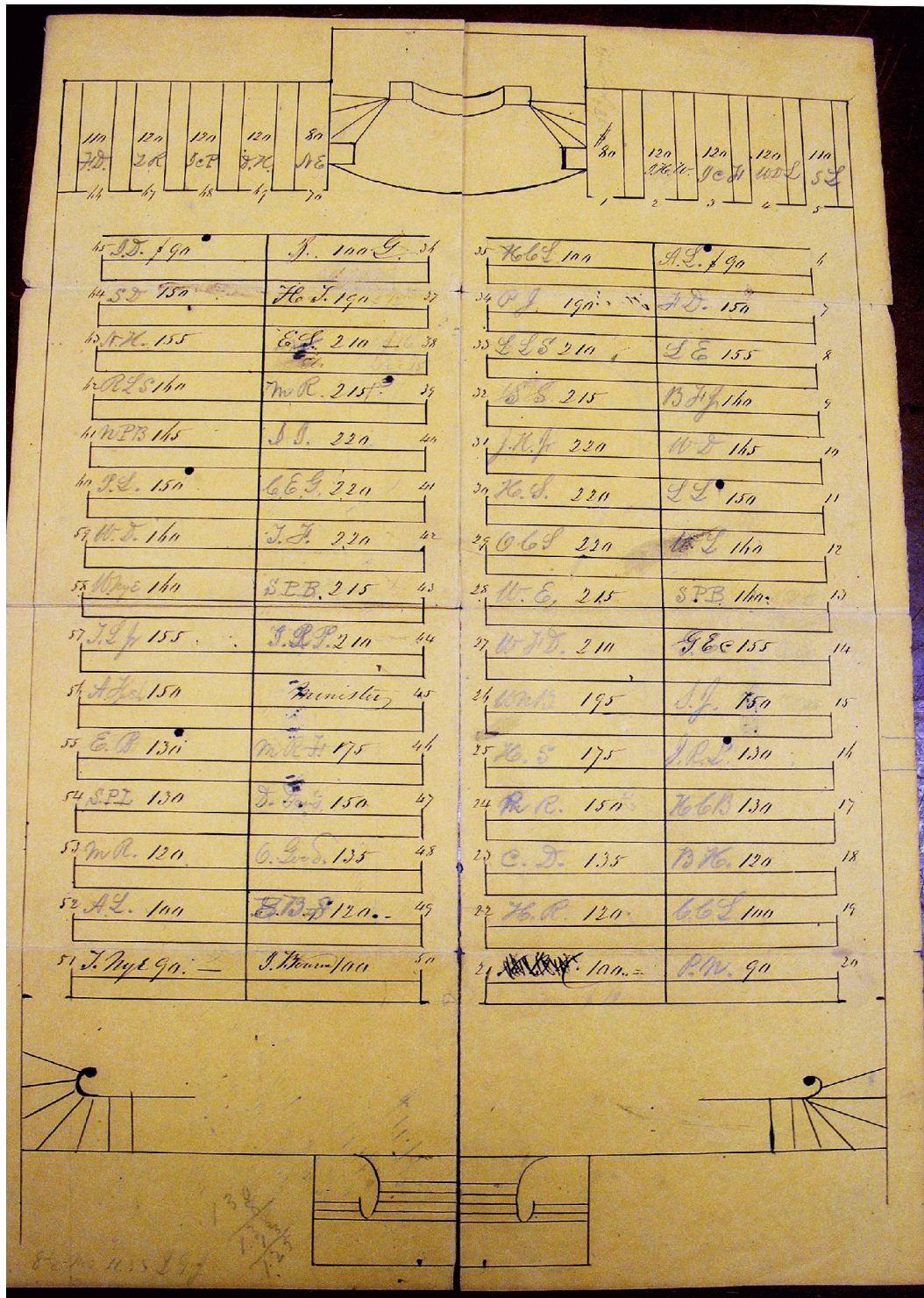


Diagram of the main floor and slip pews of our moved and rebuilt 1857 church



The next four images show the Congregational Society's April 1, 1861 list of those who then owned our church's new slip pews.<sup>(10)</sup> By that date, \$11,171 had been raised from those pew sales. The slip pews on the main floor were numbered from 1 to 70. The slip pews in the gallery were numbered from 71 to 94. Note that pew 1 and pew 45 do not appear in this main floor list of pews. Also, although out of order, the owner of pew 36 on the main floor is finally shown in the third one of these four images. The total cost of the moved and remodeled church was about \$12,000, of which the society paid \$9,000.

*Sale of Pews in 1<sup>st</sup> Cong. Meeting House.*

No.	Purchaser.	Amount	Change	Total
1	James H. Mosby	120	-	120
2	Joseph C. Fitch	120	-	120
3	W. D. S. M. Saurance	120	-	120
4	Silas Saurance	110	5	115
5	Aligail Lewis	90	6	96
6	Francis Davis	150	7	157
7	Isaac Elwood	155	11	166
8	Benj. H. Jones	140	8	148
9	Wm. Davis	145	10	155
10	Lucy Saurance	150	7	157
11	Wm. Saurance	140	7	147
12	Thos. H. Saurance	140	10	150
13	Geo. E. Clark	155	6	161
14	Silas Jones	150	8	158
15	John H. Saurance	130	7	137
16	H. C. Bunker	130	8	138
17	W. Holmes Jr.	120	-	120
18	H. C. Saurance	100	-	100
19	Paul Hys	90	-	90
20	C. H. Phinney	100	-	100
21	H. C. Phinney	120	2	122
22	Charles Dimmick	135	6	141
23	Eliz. D. Holman	150	6	156
24	E. Genta	175	6	181
25	Wm. M. Benson	195	10	205
26	Wm. H. Dimmick	210	10	220
		\$ 3620	140	\$ 3760

*Don't Saurance  
Pew 13 sold  
to H. H. Fitch  
Jan 1865*

*same  
New J. D. Wright 205*

Courtesy of Falmouth Historical Society



Sale of Prov.						
No.	Purchaser	App.	Choice		No.	
	Amount Forward	\$ 3.630	140			
		215	10			
28	Wm. H. Hare	220	10			55
29	C. C. Swift	220	10			56
30	J. S. & G. M. Swift	220	40	Sold to J. H. R. 1872 Falmouth & Dore		57
31	John Hatch	215	-			58
32	Sarah Swift	210	-	Mrs R. R. Jones		59
33	Lucey S. Swift	190	5			60
34	Prince Jenkins	100	5			61
35	H. C. Lewis	190	-			62
36	Henry Tobey	210	-			63
37	Elijah Swift	215	25			64
38	Moses Rogers	220	10			65
39	John Jenkins	220	-	Sold to city into Bunker		66
40	Geo. W. Swift	220	-			67
41	Thos. Fish	215	-			68
42	J. W. Bourne	210	-	J. H. Robinson?		69
43	Nancy R. Parker	175	5			70
44	Moses H. Fish	150	5			71
45	Daniel Davis	135	7			72
46	Obadiah Goodspeed	120	5			73
47	B. B. Sherrick	100	-			74
48	J. Bourne & A. Lawrence	90	-			75
49	Timothy Rye	100	6			76
50	Asael Lawrence	120	6			77
51	Moses Robinson	130	6			78
52	Sarah P. Lawrence					79
53		\$ 8030	295			80
54						81

Courtesy of Falmouth Historical Society



Sale of Peers.				
No.	Purchaser	App.	choice	Total
	Amount Forward	80.30	295	832.5
55	Edw. Butler	130	15	145
56	Aza Dick	150	9	159
57	Thos. Lewis Jr.	155	13	168
58	William Nye Jr.	160	7	167
59	Wm. Davis Sr.	160	10	170
60	Poly. Lawrence Sr.	150	9	159
61	Rich. P. Barker	165	10	175
62	Rich. S. Swift	160	9	169
63	Nancy Hamblin	155	6	161
64	Stephen Davis	150	6	156
65	John Davis	90	6	96
66	Frederic Davis	110	5	115
67	C. E. Goodspeed	120	5	125
68	John C. Parker	120	5	125
69	Davis Hatch	120	9	129
70	Math. E. Elwood	80	4	84
88	D. H. Gifford	60	"	60
90	T. D. Gifford	60	"	60
81	H. B. Hooker	75	"	75
83	C. C. Swift	75	5	80
87	B. Dimmick	50	3	53
36	Brad. Gifford	100	"	100
75	Wm. H. Dimmick	11	"	11
77	Elizak Swift	12	"	12
78	Geo. E. Clark	11 1/2	"	11 1/2
		\$10.659 1/2	400	\$11,092 1/2

Courtesy of Falmouth Historical Society



*Sale of Pews*

No.	Purchaser	App.	Choice	Total
	Amount Received	\$10. 65 9/10	43.3	\$11.09 2/10
79	S. H. Lawrence	11 50		11 50
80	S. H. Lawrence	11 00		11 00
73	Moses Rogers	11 00		11 00
81	Wm. H. H.	10 00		10 00
82	Wm. H. H.	30 00		30 00
Total of Sales to April 1 <sup>st</sup> 1861				\$11.17 1/10

Courtesy of Falmouth Historical Society

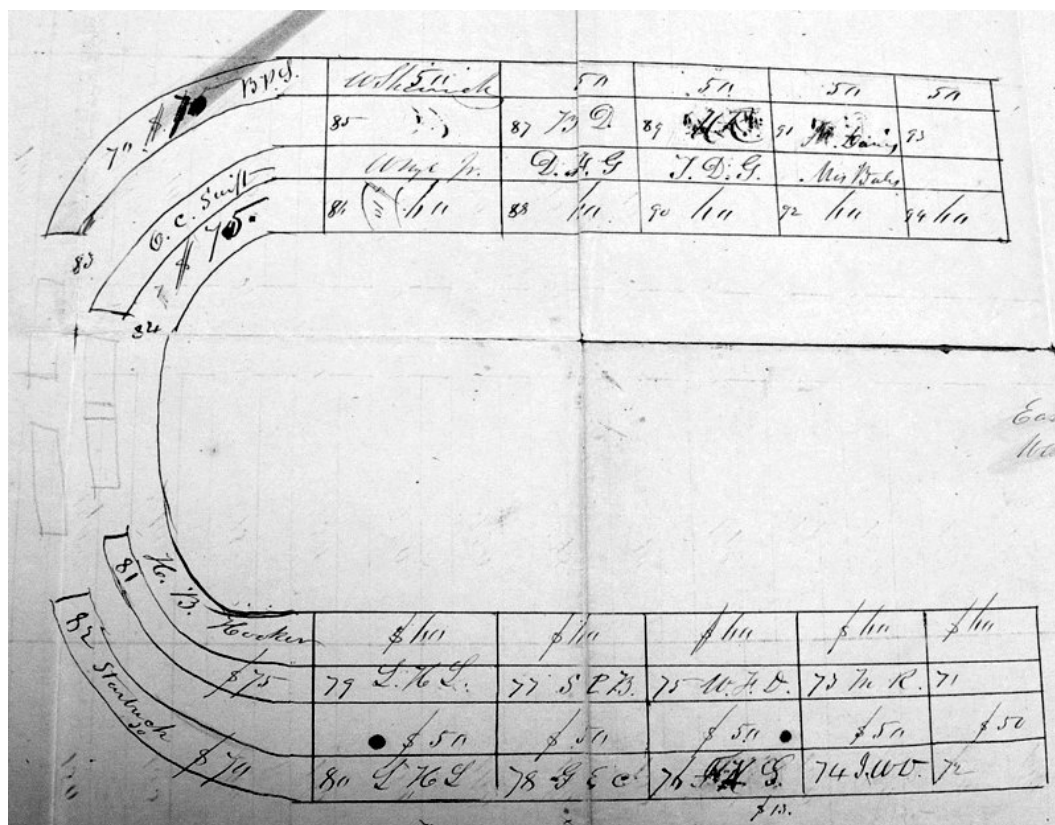
The next diagram reflects the Congregational Society's previous April 1, 1861 list of main floor pew owners, but it also indicates that pew 1 is owned by Hatch and pew 45 is the Minister's.<sup>(11)</sup>

MAIN FLOOR OF CHURCH SHOWING PEW OWNERS - 1857

66	67	68	69	70		1	2	3	4	5
Davis	Good-Speed	Parker	Hatch	Eldred	Pulpit	Hatch	Weeks	Fish	Lawrence	Lawrence
65	Davis	36	Gifford			35	Lewis	6	Lewis	
64	Davis	37	Tobey			34	Jenkins	7	Davis	
63	Hamblin	38	Swift			33	Swift	3	Eldred	
62	Swift	39	Rogers			32	Swift	9	Jones	
61	Baker	40	Jenkins			31	Hatch	10	Davis	
60	Lawrence	41	Swift			30	Swift	11	Lawrence	
59	Davis	42	Fish			29	Swift	12	Lawrence	
58	Nye	43	Bourne			28	Eldred	13	Lawrence	
57	Lewis	44	Parker			27	Dimmick	14	Clark	
56	Fish	45	Minister's			26	Bourne	15	Jones	
55	Butler	46	Fish			25	Gould	16	Lawrence	
54	Lawrence	47	Dav8s			24	Robinson	17	Bunker	
53	Robinson	48	Goodspeed			23	Dimmick	18	Holmes	
52	Lawrence	49	Baalis Shiverick			22	Robinson	19	Lawrence	
51	Nye	50	Bourne			21	Shiverick	20	Nye	

From a copy of the original plan  
Falmouth Historical Society

The diagram below shows the new slip pews in the gallery of our church, their appraised value, and the names of those who owned them or might have been given their use, such as Mrs. Cornelia Bates in pew 92.<sup>(12)</sup> Cornelia was the widow of the church's minister, Rev. William Bates, who died on September 10, 1859, less than two years after he had begun serving our church.



Gallery pew diagram with owner and pew appraisal listed

There are twenty-four slip pews in this gallery. The society record of the pews purchased by April 1, 1861, indicates that thirteen of the above pews had been sold by that date. Also, another entry in that society's book, possibly from 1863, indicates that these gallery slip pews were still unsold: 71, 72, 74, 76, 85, 91, 92, 93, 94, and 83.<sup>13</sup> In the above diagram, the only pews not shown with owners are these: 71, 72, 93, and 94. This diagram's information about those additional owned pews suggests that this diagram could be from 1863 or somewhat later. Also, it is not clear whether Rev. William Bates' widow purchased pew 92 or whether it was given to her by the society.

### Our Church's Pew Owners in about 1875

The following six images are from a small booklet in which R. C. Bodfish listed, as best as he could recall, those who owned the pews in our church in about 1875.<sup>(14)</sup>

List of Pwolders. 1st Cong<sup>l</sup>  
Church, about 1875. as taken  
by R. C. Bodfish.

<u>Pulpit side. East.</u>	
No.	
1.	Not sold
2.	Phoebe Weeks
3.	Josh C. Fish
4.	Wm D. & Mel Lawrence
5.	Silas Lawrence, Estate
<u>East Aisle</u>	
6.	Abigail Lewis (Butler)
7.	Frank Davis
8.	Deacon L. Eldred
9.	Wm Jones.
10.	Wm Davis
11.	Lewis H. Lawrence
12.	De <sup>d</sup> Nath <sup>l</sup> Lawrence
13.	Sam <sup>e</sup> Lawrence
14.	De <sup>d</sup> E. Clarke
15.	Silas Jones
16.	Jn <sup>o</sup> R. Lawrence <u>over</u>

Main floor slip pews 1-16

<u>East Aisle. Cont.</u>	
No.	
17.	Mrs Calott
18.	Ansel Green
19.	C. C. Lawrence
20.	Paul Aye
<u>Middle Aisle</u>	
21.	Capt. Phinney & Celia Sherrick
22.	Wm Parker Robinson
23.	Ch <sup>l</sup> Dimmick
24.	Roland Robinson
25.	C. Gould
26.	Warren N. Bourne
27.	Capt B. F. Jones Estate Wm F. Dimmick }
28.	Capt Thos H. Lawrence
29.	C. C. Swift
30.	C. C. C. Swift
31.	John Hatch
32.	Mrs Merendeen
33.	Lucy L. Swift (Roland R. Jones)
34.	Prince Jenkins
35.	Cynthia Swift & Hy C. Lewis
36.	Deacon Gideon Gifford

Main floor slip pews 17-36



No.	Middle Aisle	Cont.
37.	Hy. Tobey	
38.	Capt. W. C. Swift. Estate	
39.	Dr. Rogers (Mrs. General)	
40.	John Jenkins	
41.	Gen. H. Swift	
42.	Thos. Fish	
43.	Mrs. Celia Bourne	
44.	Joshua C. Robinson	
45.	Parsonage	
46.	Moses R. Fish	
47.	Danl. Davis	
48.	Alex. M. L. Goodspeed	
49.	John Butler	
50.	Isaac Bourne & Hy. Lawrence	
No.	West Aisle	
51.	Thos. Fish (Nobsque)	
52.	Anscl. Lawrence	
53.	Moses Robinson	
54.	Mrs. Sarah P. Lawrence	
55.	Edw. Butler	
56.	Arza Fish - add to Sol. Hamlin	
57.	Rev. Lewis	
58.	Wm. Arze (Holtz) Sr.	

Main floor slip pews 37-58

No.	West Aisle. Cont.
59.	Wm. Davis. Shore St.
60.	Deleg. Lawrence (Capt. Peirce)
61.	N. P. Baker
62.	Rich. L. Swift (Farnald)
63.	Sol. Hamlin ? to sold
64.	Stephen Davis (Miss Frocker)
65.	Ja. Hy. Davis
No.	Pulpit Side. West
66.	Fred. Davis Estate
67.	Carrie Goodspeed
68.	Wm. C. Parker
69.	Caroline Hatch 'nee' Crocker Estate. R.C.B.
70.	Nath. Eldred

Gallery  
See 2 Sheet.

Main floor slip pews 59-70

Et Gallery 1<sup>st</sup>  
 Cong<sup>l</sup> Church  
 71  
 72 Dr. Moses Rogers  
 73 Thos<sup>d</sup> Galine  
 74 Wm<sup>d</sup> Dimmick  
 75  
 76 Elijah Swift  
 77 Isaac Lawrence  
 78 Mrs. Aiken one Memo<sup>r</sup>  
referred to  
these No<sup>s</sup>.  
 79 Lewis A. Lawrence  
 80 Dr. H. B. Hooker  
 81  
 82  
 10<sup>th</sup> Gallery  
 83 Andrew Shiverick & Love Tick  
 84 Mrs. E. Gould  
 85 Wm<sup>d</sup> Nye  
 86 Capt. Jos<sup>d</sup> Dimmick  
 87 David Gifford  
 88 David Gifford  
 89 Sh<sup>d</sup> Robinson. Mrs. Newcomb  
 90 Th<sup>d</sup> D. Gifford  
 91

Gallery pews 71-91

West Gallery Cont.  
 92  
 93  
 94  
 The name of Robinson  
 & Ephraim  
 Frank Shiverick  
 Jabez David &  
 Stephen David  
 belong to 4 of the  
 9 blank no<sup>s</sup>  
 My list was not obtained from  
 any record - but from my  
 recollection of the owners  
 names & information gained  
 from others. I hence may be  
 a few errors. I think there may  
 be two or three names of occupants  
 simply. Thos<sup>d</sup> Galine No 74 is  
 one.  
 R. C. Rodfish

Gallery pews 92-94



### Chart of Pew Owners in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> century

In this period, the society was beginning to buy back pews so they could be used as free seats. In the pew chart below, notice the unowned pews.<sup>(15)</sup> At this time, it was important for there to be ushers at worship to help visitors locate the unowned pews they could sit in.

65		36	35		6
64		37	34		7
63	JH Blackway	38	33	CH Gifford	8
62		39	32	SB Caden	9
61	JG Fish	EM March	40	31	Mrs S E Davis
				30	W E Perry
60	HL Pierce	A Lawrence	41	29	TL Swift
				28	W C Davis
59	JM Howe	GE Black	42	27	Mrs E Swift
				26	W E Lawrence
58	SA Hatten	FT Lawrence	43	25	NS Ellis
				24	H H Gifford
57	Mrs SB Lewis		44	23	Mrs F D Robinson
				22	Mrs J H Crocker
56	CR Robinson	Passing Pew	45	21	Mrs S E Lawrence
				20	J E Dwight
55	AF Kelley	AL Pettee	46	19	Miss E M Jones
				18	W F Davis
54	LP Cole	O Jacobson	47	17	Mrs H Warren
				16	SD Robinson
53	CH Gifford	DR Jarvis	48	15	
				14	
52			49	13	Mrs S E Caden
				12	
51			50	11	J Davidson
				10	

Main floor pew chart of our church from 1905 or somewhat later

Note that H H Gifford is the owner of pew 13 in this chart. The society's 1861 new pew sales list shows that pew 13 was then purchased by Thos. H. Lawrence. However, that 1861 pew sales list also has a note in black ink added to it, which indicates that H H Gifford was sold that



same pew in 1905, as shown in the image below. That note indicates that Gifford was sold that pew by Saml Lawrence. R.C. Bodfish's list of owned pews from about 1875 indicates that Sam Lawrence owned that pew 13 at that time.

12	Wm. Lawrence	140	7	147
13	Robt. H. Lawrence	140	10	149
14	Geo. E. Clark	155	6	161
15	Silas Jones	150	8	158

Jan 1905  
H H Gifford

A black ink note added to the April 1, 1861 new pew sales list, indicating that in January 1905, pew 13 was sold to H H Gifford

## ENDNOTES

1. *Falmouth Town Records*, June 21, 1756.
2. The names of these pew owners appear in Frederick Freeman, *The History of Cape Cod: The Annals of the Thirteen Towns of Barnstable County* (Boston: Printed for the author by Geo. C. Rand & Avery, 3 Cornhill, 1862), Vol. 2, 447, 448.
3. *A Record of the Proceedings of the Committee of the First Congregational Society in Falmouth, Massachusetts chosen May 20<sup>th</sup> AD 1824 agreeable to an Act passed the 7<sup>th</sup> of Febry preceeding entitled "An Act enabling the first Congregational Society in the Town of Falmouth to dispose of certain Real Estate"* (15). This record is in the archives of the Falmouth Historical Society.
4. *A Record of the Proceedings of the Committee*, 45.
5. *A Record of the Proceedings of the Committee*, 18–20.
6. Edward Buck, *Massachusetts Ecclesiastical Law* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1866), 140–141.
7. *Specifications for raising, enlarging, and altering the old Church at Falmouth*. This copy of those specifications is in the archives of the church, and it is said to have belonged to builder Alvin Crowell. 10–11.
8. This document, which shows the appraised values and owners of the main floor slip pews of our rebuilt 1857 church, is on a goldenrod colored sheet in the archives of the church.
9. Why do I think the information in this diagram is likely earlier than that found in the society's 1861 list of slip pew owners? Here's one possible reason: This diagram of pew ownership shows pew 41 as appraised at \$220 and owned by C. E. G. It also shows pew 67 as appraised at \$120

and owned by L. R. The initials C. E. G. may have referred to Caroline Elizabeth Goodspeed, whose maiden surname was Shiverick. She is said to have married Harrison Goodspeed in 1850 and that he died on May 5, 1857, at the time when our church was in the process of being moved and rebuilt. In our Congregational Society's recorded April 1, 1861 list of owned pews, C. E. Goodspeed is mentioned. However, the pew she is shown owning there is not pew 41, but rather pew 67, which was appraised at \$100 cheaper than pew 41. In that 1861 list, pew 41 is said to be owned instead by Geo. W. Swift.

From his memory, R. C. Bodfish made a list of those who owned the pews of our church in 1875. That list is also shown in this chapter. As Bodfish noted, pew 67 was then owned by Carrie Goodspeed. I suspect that "Carrie" was likely Caroline Elizabeth Goodspeed. And, if that is correct, the information in that 1861 list was apparently later than the information in this diagram. Carolinee died on April 10, 1909, and she and her husband Harrison were buried in Falmouth's Oak Grove Cemetery.

10. *FCS5*. This record book contains the first four images in this section. Those images show who purchased our church's new slip pews after our church was moved off the Green to its present location. The source of the modern diagram of pews on the main floor of our church, included in this section, is unknown to me.

11. This modern diagram of main floor slip pews in our church is in our church's archive, but it is based on information from the Falmouth History Society. The creator of this diagram is unknown to me.

12. This diagram of the new slip pews in the gallery of our church is on a goldenrod-colored sheet in the archives of our church.

13. *A Record of the Proceedings of the Committee*, 47.

A possible discrepancy in this diagram of gallery pews is that it shows O. C. Swift owning pew 84, whereas the society's 1861 sales record shows him as having purchased not that pew but rather pew 83. In that 1861 sales record, the number 3 appears to have been written in black ink over the original number entered there, which may have been a 4. That overwrite may have been a correction of the record, which was not made in this diagram of gallery pews purchasers.

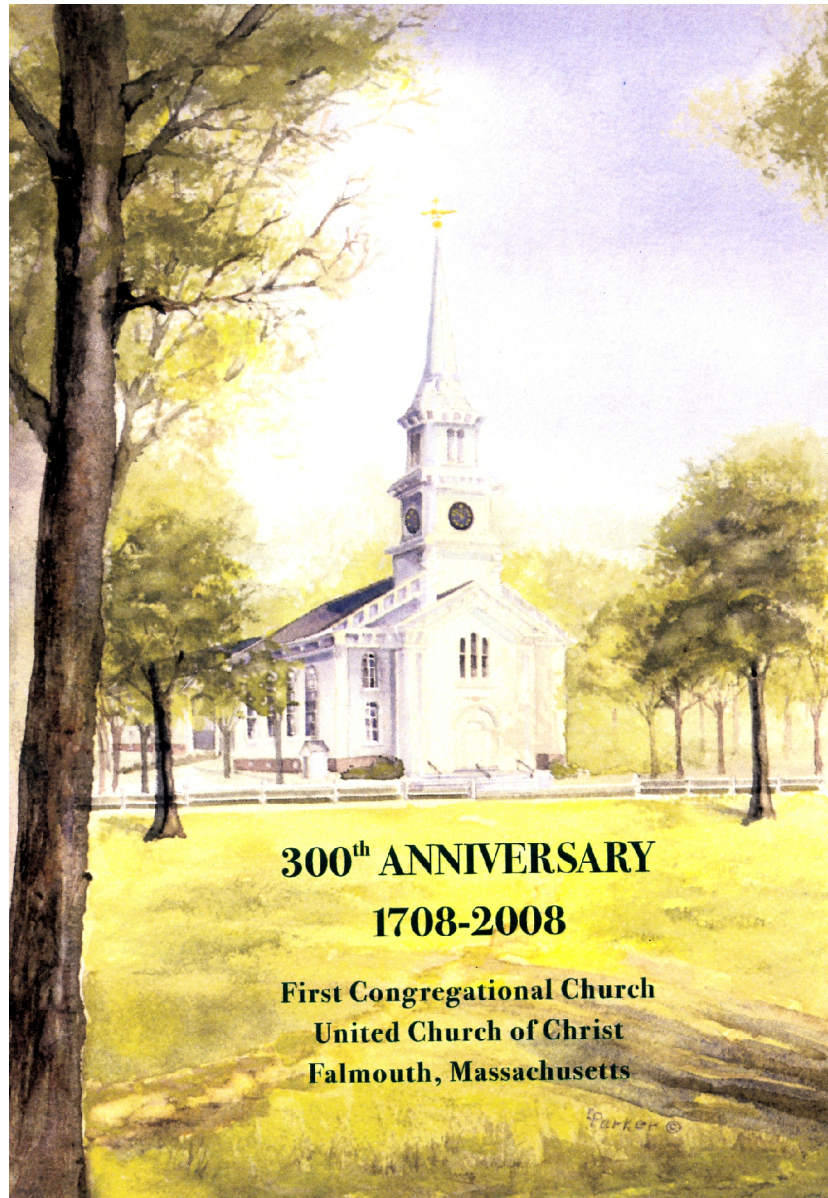
14. The six images shown here from R. C. Bodfish's pew holder list are in a small booklet in the archives of the church.

15. This pew chart from 1905 or somewhat later is framed and hanging on a hallway wall in our church.

## APPENDIX IX

### **300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sunday: October 26, 2008**

*Gathered October 28, 1708*



*Cover Artist: Lois Parker*

## 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

With love and reflection of this place we hold dear,  
We celebrate our church's three-hundredth year.

For years many people have come here to pray,  
To hear God's Word that would show them the Way.

Built with great faith plus vision and love,  
It grew and flourished with help from above.

It's been here to nourish and feed hungry souls,  
Being blessed with God's love that makes us feel whole.

Souls have been saved and faith's been restored,  
These gifts were given through our church and our Lord.

Years have brought changes in the building we know,  
But t'was the teaching of Jesus that helped it to grow.

We're proud of its history and our Paul Revere Bell,  
And the pastors and teachers made the membership swell.

Three hundred years, it's still growing and thrives,  
Giving strength and hope, plus enriching our lives.

We are proud of our church and its beautiful steeple,  
That serves as a beacon welcoming all of its people.

We give thanks to our Lord for this special day,  
Bless this church and its future with God's love, this we pray.

Judy Nickerson, 9/07

# **300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary/ Covenant Renewal Sunday October 26, 2008**

**ORGAN PRELUDE** *It Is Well With My Soul* arr. Pethel

## **MOMENT OF GREETINGS AND CONCERNS**

[We invite everyone to fill out the Fellowship Pad in their pew at this time. Please pass this pad down your pew and back again. Thank you.]

## **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

## **300<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE**

F. Thomas Haynes, Chairman

**\*HYMN No. 440** *O Beautiful for Spacious Skies*

## **\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

**Leader:** I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

**People:** Time and time again, since our Falmouth church was first gathered in 1708, the members of our church have freely entered into covenant together to be a church of Jesus Christ.

**Leader:** Sunday after Sunday, and generation after generation over three centuries now, our parishioners have come together as a household of faith to proclaim God's holiness and immeasurable worth.

**People:** This Sunday morning we gather once again to discover God's presence among us in worship. We also gather to celebrate our congregation's three-hundredth anniversary and to renew our church's covenant before God.

**Unison:** All praise, honor and glory be unto God, and to God's son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Redeemer!



**INVOCATION (in unison)**

Almighty God, we come together this morning seeking your divine presence. We pray that you will open our hearts and minds to the movement of your Spirit. Bless our church that its ministries and capacity for service in Christ's name may be strengthened. Increase our faith, enlarge our vision, deepen our compassion and outreach to help others. Empower our church, so that as it moves from this day of celebration into its fourth century, our church will always be faithful in its witness to your great love revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Praying as Jesus taught us, we say, "Our Father..."

**THE LORD'S PRAYER (using "debts")****CHORAL INTERLUDE***Children's service -**Lee Campbell***ANTHEM** *Sing to the Lord a New Song*

Courtney

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

I Corinthians 2:6-9

NT Black 202/Red 167

Matthew 13:34-35, 44

NT Black 18/Red 15

**CALL TO PRAYER**

Rev. Dale Hempen

Minister: The Lord be with you.

Choir: And with thy spirit.

Minister: Let us pray: O Lord show Thy mercy upon us.

Choir: And grant us Thy salvation.

Minister: O God, make clean our hearts within us.

Choir; And take not Thy Holy Spirit from us.

**MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER, PASTORAL PRAYER,  
CHORAL RESPONSE**

**\*300TH ANNIVERSARY COVENANT RENEWAL (Unison)**  
 Jan Hull, Moderator, Rev. Dr. Douglas Showalter

**Article II – Covenant, Constitution and Bylaws**  
**First Congregational Church of Falmouth, Massachusetts**  
**of the United Church of Christ**

The covenant by which this Church exists as a distinct body and which every member accepts is as follows:

Acknowledging Jesus Christ to be our Savior and Lord, and accepting the Holy Scriptures as our rule of faith and practice and recognizing the privilege and duty of uniting ourselves for Christian fellowship, the enjoyment of Christian ordinances, the public worship of God, and the advancement of his Kingdom in the world, we do now, in the sight of God, and invoking his blessing, solemnly covenant and agree with each other to associate ourselves to be a Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, as warranted by the word of God.

Having truly repented of our sins and heartily forsaken them, we devote ourselves to the love, obedience, and service of Jesus Christ; we take his word as the law of our lives and the Holy Spirit as our comforter and guide; and trusting in his grace to confirm and strengthen us, we promise to follow Him in all things, to walk with his disciples in love, and to live for his glory.

**\*HYMN No. 362** *Awake, My Soul, Stretch Every Nerve*

**\*BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE**

**\*POSTLUDE** *Sortie Toccata*

Dubois

\*\*\*\*\*

\*Those who are able, please stand

Child care is available. Please speak to an usher.

For those with hearing or sight impairments, please ask a Deacon for hearing devices or a print-out of today's sermon.



**Greeters** are Nancy & Ron Church and Ellie Noyes.

**Ushers** are Mary & Art Baker, Cliff Duckworth, John Farrington, Betsy & John Honey, and Lois & David Parker.

**Flowers** on the altar-table are given in celebration of our church's 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

**Junior Deacon** is Nolan Kitts.

**Deacons of the Month** are Linda Ryan and Tom Haynes.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

We welcome to our church this morning, Rev. Dr. James Antal, Conference Minister and President of our *Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ*, and Rev. Dale Hempen, Associate Conference Minister in the Southeast Area of our *MACUCC*, who will be conducting our worship along with Rev. Dr. Douglas Showalter.

At the climax of this morning's service, our congregation will renew the Covenant of our church. In accordance with Congregational tradition, our church was created as an independent ecclesiastical body on October 28, 1708, by the solemn act of individuals owning such a covenant together. Our church's modern Covenant is found in our church's bylaws. As defined in those bylaws, our church exists by virtue of that Covenant. Every member essentially signs that Covenant when he/she joins our church and signs our membership book.

Unfortunately, history has not passed down to us the text of our church's original Covenant in 1708. Through the years Congregational churches like ours have revised their Covenants to meet the needs of changing times. But, time and again through its 300 year history, our congregation has solemnly renewed the Covenant of our church which existed in its day. And so we as a congregation will do today, as we stand on the threshold and prepare to enter our church's fourth century together!

**For those considering membership...**On Sunday, November 16, immediately following worship, the Membership Committee

will host a light lunch and an opportunity to learn more about our church for those considering membership. If you are interested in attending, please call Evelyn Johnson (508-495-9582), Marcia Young (508-540-5877) or the church office (508-548-3700).

There are openings for **altar-table flowers** on the Sundays of November 2 and 30. If you are interested in giving flowers, please contact Lynne Goslee at 508-540-1469.



### **300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee**

Chairman, F. Thomas Haynes,

Rev. Al Allenby, Rob Bowerman, Erin Bradbury, Bob Brooks, Gair Brooks, Booje Calfee, Lee Campbell, John Caspole, Fran Cerulli, Greg Contos, Judy Ernst, Fay Hamre, Dick Harmon, Jack Hathaway, Ilene Hathaway, Philip Holmes, Jean Holmes, John Honey, Jan Hull, Dick Meyer, Wiley Osborn, David S. Parker, Lois Parker, Marge Rugen, Erma Ruskey, Tom Ryan, Linda Ryan, Rev. Dr. Doug Showalter, Marcia Young.

Logo Artists: Design, Fran Cerulli; Coloration, Jan Hull

A special thank you to all the above individuals, and all the other people in our church family who helped make this year-long celebration of our 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary such a wonderful experience for our church.

### **300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Capital Fund Drive**

Chairman, Greg Contos

A special thank you to all the people who helped with our 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary fund drive and contributed to it, as that drive enabled our church to refresh and improve our church home in a number of ways as noted below.

### **Sanctuary, Narthex, and Kitchen Renewal**

Our sanctuary and narthex were completely repainted. The sanctuary floor was refinished. All pews were repainted and new seat backs and cushions were installed. New pew book racks with religious inscriptions beneath them were installed. Two spaces were made for wheelchairs in the front pews. The electrical and lighting systems were upgraded and new lighting fixtures were installed. The sanctuary wall clock was repaired. Various other improvements were also made. Also, our kitchen was refurbished to meet current codes for a commercial kitchen and a new stove, coffee machines, lighting, and a ventilation hood were added. A special thank you to the above individuals and Lynn Goslee, the Women's Union, Walter Slaboden, and all the other people who helped with these renewal projects.

Before and following our worship service, we invite you to enjoy the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary displays which are present in our church this morning:

**Ministers' Gallery:** In the hallway outside our church parlor there is a gallery of pictures of our church's ministers over the past three centuries. That display was created by our Archivist Lois Parker and her husband David.

**First Meeting House:** In the lobby outside our church office there is a 1"/1' scale model of what the first meeting house used by our church may have looked like. Carefully take the roof off and see our parishioners inside. That model was created by the children and young people of our Church School under the direction of Rev. Dr. Allan Page, one of our Honorary Ministers. Also on display is a cardboard representation of our current church building which was created by parishioner Rob Andersen years ago after we built the Constance and Raymond Faxon Christian Education Center.

**First Congregational Church Time Line:** On display in our Fellowship Hall there is a time line of significant events in our church, nation, and world over the past three hundred years. This time line was created by Marge Rugen and Phil and Jean Holmes.

**300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Memorial Monument:** On display outdoors in front of our church there is a granite monument and plaque, given by Dick and Betty Baker, which commemorates our church's 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**Artistic portrayals:** We thank Lois Parker for the gift of her painting of our church which is the cover of this worship bulletin; Arlene Cloninger for the gift of her painting of our church in fall which is hung in the hallway outside our church parlor; the Bethany United Church of Christ in Montpelier, Vermont, for the gift of the painting of their church which now hangs in the hallway outside our church parlor; a framed, counted cross stitch picture of Jesus, hand-worked and given by former member Joanne Gibbons; and Walter Slaboden for the gift of his two paintings of our church, one to be presented this morning to representatives from our sister church in Montpelier in celebration of their 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the other to be hung in our church.

### **300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee Activities 2006-2008**

#### **2006**

Sunday, May 21     300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee established  
and subcommittees formed.

#### **2007**

Friday, May 18     300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Capital Fund Drive Kick-  
off Dinner

Sunday, Oct. 28     Heritage Sunday Initiates our year-long  
Celebration

Sunday, Nov. 18     Costumed Morning and Evening Commu-  
nity Thanksgiving Services

Saturday, Dec. 1     Christmas Fair with 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mem-  
orabilia presented

#### **2008**

Sunday, January 13     Hymn Heritage Sunday

Sunday, January 28     Confirmation Sunday in Fellowship Hall  
while Sanctuary is renovated

Sunday, March 2     Sanctuary Rededication Service

Saturday, March 29     "Nooks and Crannies of Cape Cod," histori-  
cal talk by Jim Coogan

Sunday, April 6     Representatives from our church join the  
Bethany United Church of Christ in Mont-  
pelier, Vermont, in worship and Holy Com-  
munion during their 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and  
share that experience with our congregation  
the following Sunday

Saturday, April 12     Our Barnstable Association of the Massa-  
chusetts Conference of the United Church of  
Christ meets in our church sharing our 300<sup>th</sup>  
celebration

Sunday, April 20     American Guild of Organists Concert featur-  
ing Dr. Martin Jean from Yale's Institute of  
Sacred Music

- Sunday, May 18 Quissett Revival Sunday, concluding the service on the Village Green in an outline of where our church used to stand
- Sunday, June 8 Memoir Sunday, honoring our long-term members
- Sunday, June 15 Dedication of the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Memorial Monument
- Sunday, October 12 Guest preacher, Dr. Peggy Bendroth from the Congregational Library in Boston
- Tuesdays, October 14 & 21 Discussions of the history of our church
- Sunday, October 26 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary/Covenant Renewal Sunday with guest preacher, Rev. Dr. James Antal, Conference Minister and President of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, and Celebration breakfast and brunch

✂      **This Week's Snipit**      ✂  
 October 26, 2008

This day in October 2008 marks the end of our church's 300<sup>th</sup> year. Snipits closes up shop. It is time now to look to new horizons with high hopes, resolve, and trust in God. We set sail into the next century on a running tide. We are guided by those who came before us who sang, "Jesus, Savior, pilot me Over life's tempestuous sea; Unknown waves before me roll, Hiding rock and treacherous shoal; Chart and compass come from thee; Jesus, Savior, pilot me." Thus, we set the course of those to come, trusting that other familiar words ring true, "Faith of our Fathers (is) living still."

### THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

Mon., Oct. 27	9:30 a.m.	Craft Workshop
Tues., Oct. 28	9:00 a.m.	Exercise class
	10:00 a.m.	Friendly Circle
Thurs., Oct. 30	6:00 p.m.	Bell Choir
	7:00 p.m.	Senior Choir

### NEXT SUNDAY

Next Sunday is **Loyalty Sunday**. This will begin our fall Stewardship Campaign for our church's ministry in 2009. Empty gift baskets for the Christmas Fair will be available to pick up during coffee hour – baskets will come with suggestions for filling.

### CHURCH DIRECTORY

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**REV. DR. DOUGLAS K. SHOWALTER**, Senior Minister  
**LAURA ABBOTT**, Director of Christian Education  
**HOWARD J. WHITMORE**, Director of Music, C. M. M.  
**PATRICIA M. CREWS**, Organist, C. M. M.  
**MARTHA EVANS**, Office Administrator  
**RICK HENDRICKS**, Sexton



## History Revisited

Standing tall by village green,  
 An historic church has long been seen.  
 That church, built by a sturdy band  
 Was erected on then-English land,  
 And today we celebrate that date,  
 That distant Seventeen-O-Eight.

Men wore frocks coats in those old days,  
 The women, pelisses, corsets, stays...  
 Twice turned, an hour-glass would determine  
 The length of two-hour Hell-fire sermon.

Moved, and placed on Village Green,  
 The church has so much history seen!  
 It was Paul Revere who fashioned well  
 Our church's big melodious bell,  
 And for special times, our parishioners, kneeling,  
 Can hear today the old bell pealing.

Time marches on, the years roll past,  
 But our little white church was built to last.  
 Through Revolution, battle, strife,  
 It played its part in village life,  
 A place for solace, shelter, care,  
 For hope, stability and prayer.

Today, with past and present blended,  
 Our church has grown, outreach extended,  
 Every service well attended.  
 Impervious to the tooth of Time,  
 No-one could term it past its prime.  
 The little white church with spire so tall  
 Has seen kings topple, empires fall.  
 Still it endures. We heed its call.  
 With open arms, it welcomes all.

Adelaide Cummings



~ The End ~